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A

NARRATIVE

OF A

JOURNEY INTO PERSIA,

AND

RESIDENCE AT TEHERAN:

CONTAINING

A Descriptive Itinerary

FROM

CONSTANTINOPLE TO THE PERSIAN CAPITAL;

ALSO

A VARIETY OF ANECDOTES,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE HISTORY, COMMERCE, RELIGION, MANNERS, CUSTOMS OF THE INHABITANTS, MILITARY POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT, &c.

FROM THE FRENCH OF

M. TANCOIGNE,

ATTACHED TO THE EMBASSY OF GENERAL GARDANE.

EMBELLISHED WITH AN ACCURATE MAP, AND A PLATE REPRESENTING THE INTERIOR OF A HAREM, FROM AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY A PERSIAN ARTIST.

One line written on the spot is worth a thousand recollections.—
Anon.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM WRIGHT,
46, FLEET STREET.

1820.

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W. Shackell, Printer, 11, Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, London.

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

MIRZA-ABOUL-HASSAN-KHAN,

&c. &c. &c.

AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY

FROM

HIS PERSIAN MAJESTY FETH-ALI-SHAH, TO THE COURT OF LONDON:

The following Letters,

IN WHICH AN IMPARTIAL, THOUGH FLATTERING PICTURE,

OF THE PRESENT STATE OF PERSIA IS GIVEN,

AND, ABOVE ALL, AMPLE JUSTICE HAS BEEN DONE

TO THE VIRTUES AND TALENTS OF HIS

ILLUSTRIOUS AND ENLIGHTENED SOVEREIGN,

IS DEDICATED,

BY HIS EXCELLENCY'S MOST HUMBLE

AND VERY OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE EDITOR.

PREFACE.

In giving publicity to the following Narrative of a journey into Persia, performed in the suite of General Gardane's Embassy, I do not undertake to remind my readers either of the political object or results of that mission, as they are sufficiently known to all those who have observed the progress of events; besides, such are the many important changes which have taken place in the aspect of European affairs since the period of our visit to the Persian capital, that the interest which might have been then attached to a detail of the diplomatic relations of France and Persia, are now almost entirely removed, while that which concerns the history, natural productions, manners, and customs of the last named country, has rather increased than diminished. This arises no less from the enlightened policy of Feth Ali Chah's government, and the progressive advances of his subjects towards

European civilization, than the growing curiosity of the public for all that tends to illustrate the condition of remote nations. Having thus shortly alluded to my motives for appearing before the public, it remains for me to give an outline of the plan pursued in accomplishing the proposed object.

The first fourteen letters contain details of our route from Constantinople to Teheran, together with a description of the country through which we passed. The three next communications are intended to present an abridged historical view of the various dynasties that have reigned in Persia, from the remotest epochas of the monarchy, down to the reigning family. I have added some notes taken on the spot during my journey; these contain occasional reflections, and my opinion on the origin of various customs, when it did not coincide with that of other travellers. As to the accuracy of historical fact, we can only know what we have read; while the science of the historian seems to consist in being able to distinguish between true or probable events, and those which are false or unworthy of belief. If I have cited the oriental writers, it was in order that their assertions might be compared with those of

the Greeks and Romans, who had mentioned the same nations. By taking from each all that savours of partiality or exaggeration, a fair chance is afforded of elucidating, if not the whole, at least a part of the truth.

The succeeding letters contain a variety of details relative to the climate, population, and commerce of Persia; as also on the religion, manners, and customs of the people. These are the immediate result of personal observation. I have occasionally named CHARDIN, the most accurate of all the French travellers who have written on this country, for an European visitor might even at this day go all over Persia with his book as a guide, except as it regards the costume, which has undergone a total change. Although TAVERNIER has fallen into comparative disrepute, I do not think all our prejudices against him are equally well founded. From the tone of persuasion which runs through this traveller's work, it would appear that his errors were by no means intentional, but rather those of the head than the heart: on the other hand, many of his descriptions are remarkable for their truth and fidelity.

The works of our learned orientalists ren-

dered the attempt, were I even equal to it, of composing a treatise on the language and literature of Persia unnecessary; but I thought it might be agreeable to my readers to see a few extracts from the celebrated GULISTAN of Saadi. The sentiments and maxims contained in that singular production, are not destitute of interest or merit, nor can it be denied that all the poets of Europe have been more or less indebted to the eastern writers for allegorical illustration and poetical imagery.

The Itinerary, or table of distances from Constantinople to Teheran, through Asia Minor and Armenia, is calculated by hours of march, according to the established custom in Turkey; that of my journey from Erzerum to Trebizond, and my return by the Black Sea, is upon a similar principle. After having appropriated a few pages to a description of the Turkish capital, and an account of the revolutions which occurred there in 1807 and the following year, the volume terminates with some desultory remarks made on my route to the frontiers of Poland, through Romelia, Bulgaria, Wallachia, and Moldavia.

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LETTERS,

&c.

LETTER I.

Preliminary Explanations, &c.

Constantinople, Sept. 8, 1807.

A RESIDENCE of three years in this capital having enabled me to collect various observations on the country, its manners and customs, I was preparing to put a finishing hand to the work in order to forward it to you, when an event, which I consider fortunate because it will permit me to make new and still more curious researches, has occurred to retard the execution of my project. General Gardane, minister plenipotentiary from France to the king of Persia, arrived at Constantinople a month ago, and I have this moment received an order to prepare for accompanying him to Teheran. I had for a long time past been desirous of performing this journey, and I have more than once missed the opportunity,

but I shall no longer have reason to regret that circumstance, as it would have been extremely difficult to undertake it under more favourable auspices than the present. Determined that you shall not lose by the change, I intend to communicate all the circumstances which appear worthy of notice, according as they present themselves in the course of our journey. We are going to traverse Turkey in Asia, Armenia, and Persia. I need scarcely add that these interesting countries are fertile mines for the observations of the European traveller.

My principal object is to depict the actual state of the various countries which we visit, having always considered this plan as the most likely to excite interest: I shall touch very lightly on the history of wars and revolutions, leaving a more detailed account of these to other writers.

We travel in company with Mirza Muhammed Riza, minister plenipotentiary from the court of Persia to the French government. He comes from Warsaw, at which place he found NAPOLEON, and where his mission terminated, for the events of the war did not admit of his proceeding to Paris. He is a fine-looking man; wears his beard long, and a very rich dress; his whole discourse with us is on the magnificence of his sovereign, and the wonders which we are going to see in Persia. In adopting the unfavourable ideas of the Turks on that nation, I should most probably imbibe some of their prejudices;

but this would have destroyed the agreeable illusion which enables one to support the fatigues of long and painful journies.

Our ambassador has already ordered a considerable number of horses to be engaged for those who accompany him, and a proportionate supply of mules for our baggage. We shall form a caravan of about one hundred persons, including the Turkish muleteers and their kervandii-baschi, or chief of the caravan. A mehmandar, an officer of the Porte, is appointed to conduct the embassy to the frontiers of Persia, and to take care that it shall be properly supplied with provisions. Finally, a konaktchi-bachi, under the orders of the former, will precede us, one day's journey in advance, to prepare accommodations, &c.

The General, finding so numerous a company sufficiently formidable in itself, has not considered it necessary to demand an escort; we are, in fact, all armed, as if we were going on a military expedition. These precautions should not surprise you in a country where the roads are often infested with robbers, and in which the very shepherds guard their flocks with pistols, a poignard in their belts, and a gun on the shoulder.

LETTER II.

Departure from Constantinople.—Scutari; Journey from that Town to Nicomedia, or Ismith.—Kartal.—Pentik.—Gheibize.—Herekia.—Description of Nicomedia.—Visit to the Pacha.

Nicomedia, Sept. 13, 1807.

We left Constantinople three days ago. On the 10th, in the morning, we crossed the Bosphorus, and landed at Scutari, a town situated on the coast of Asia, opposite the capital: it is the Chrysopolis, or golden city, of the ancients; so named, no doubt, from the magical effect produced on it by the setting sun. We all assembled at the house of Mirza Muhammed Riza, the Persian ambassador mentioned in my last. He inhabited Scutari, according to the usual custom of his countrymen who come to Constantinople; and his konak, or hotel, was the general place of meeting for the two embassies.

At half past four in the afternoon we caused our baggage to be laden, mounted our horses, and the caravan commenced its march to Kartal, a large town five hours* distance from Scutari, in a rich country, well cultivated and full of beautiful gardens.

* Distances are counted in Turkey by saat, or hours of march of a horse or a caravan.

Our second day's journey was terminated at Gheibize, a handsome little town, where there is a bazar, and square ornamented with a neat fountain. During those two days we coasted along the shores of the gulf of Nicomedia, and if we suffered excessively from the heat, we were amply compensated by the charming landscapes which have been almost constantly in view.

On leaving the village of Pentik, the ancient Panticapea, which is now inhabited only by Greek fishermen, a large vine full of excellent grapes, and completely ripe, seemed to invite us to take some refreshment, and accordingly several of our party did not fail to allay their thirst there.

Thus far nothing remarkable occurred; we employed the afternoon in walking about Gheibize, and passed the night in a large khan or caravansery, in a ruinous state. Our baggage remained at the entrance of the town, under the care of the muleteers of the caravan.

Previous to entering Nicomedia, where we slept last night, the landscape was changed for a few moments, but without being the less picturesque. A road cut into the solid rock rendered the beginning of our journey more painful than that of the preceding day, but we were soon agreeably surprised to find, at the foot of a sterile and parched declivity, the ruins of an ancient town called Heraclea, on which is built the village of Herekia. This place is not large, but its position on the banks of a stream shaded with beauti-

ful fig and other fruit trees, rendered it very agreeable, and induced us to halt there to breakfast. Here we saw the ruins of a castle which belongs to more modern times, and is said to have been built by the Genoese.

All the country which separates Heraclea from Nicomedia, in a space of about six leagues, is covered with wood. Nicomedia, or Ismith as the Turks now call it, was the extent of this day's journey; we arrived there in the afternoon, and were lodged in a handsome house belonging to one of the principal Greeks: I should add, that our mehmandar caused the doors to be broken open, on the refusal of the proprietor to receive us!

We could not have found any place to lodge in, if abandoned to ourselves in a country destitute of inns and lodgings for travellers; and were therefore obliged to confide in our Mahometan conductors, merely endeavouring to mitigate as much as possible the tyranny they exercise on those poor people in the name of the Grand Signor. The ambassador was received on his arrival by the Tersana-emini, superintendant of the arsenal of this city, who presented us, according to custom, with pipes and coffee in a kiosk on the sea shore.

A bin-bachi, or colonel of the Nizami Djedid, new troops trained in the European mode, came this morning to conduct us to the Pacha, who had taken the precaution of ordering the dead bodies of a man that was hanged, and another beheaded,

which had been exposed in front of his palace, to be removed previous to the General's visit.

The Pacha received the ambassador with all the honours due to his rank: he informed us that he was preparing to march against the rebel Kara Osman, who occupies Sabandje, a neighbouring district to the eastward. In fact, the city is full of his troops, and what is more extraordinary in these countries, the inhabitants have not much reason to complain of their indiscipline. Sabandje being in our road, the Pacha has deemed it his duty to recommend our taking another direction, which will lead us some leagues out of our way, in order to avoid meeting the rebels.

Nicomedia is eighteen leagues east of Constantinople, at the extremity of a gulf, to which it has given its name. This city, the residence of a Pacha, contains about twenty thousand inhabitants, Greeks, Armenians, and Turks, the latter forming the chief part of the inhabitants. The Armenians have their houses on a hill which commands the town, and whence some ruins are perceived. Its inclosure is full of the remains of ancient monuments, which we had not time to visit, and its environs pestiferous on the side of the sea, from the stench of some salt pans, are on the opposite side covered with fruitful gardens of all kinds, the produce of which is transported to Constantinople. The forests in the vicinity contain excellent timber for ship building.

LETTER III.

Road from Nicomedia to Nicea, or Isnick.—Karamousal.—Kiz Dervend.—Lake Ascanius.—Poialidja.—Description of Nice, its Antiquities, &c.

Nicea, Sept. 15, 1807.

Two days have passed since our departure from Nicomedia, and no disagreeable accident has yet happened to disturb the gaiety which animates our caravan: I consider this as a good omen, and if we have not hitherto experienced many privations, we shall have need of it when the hardships usually incidental to travelling in those countries commence.

We left the walls of Nicomedia the day before yesterday, at seven in the morning, escorted by some horsemen of the Pacha. The first object that presented itself to our notice on quitting the city, was a permanent gibbet, which seemed to await some new victim.

Having deviated from the usual road, to avoid meeting the rebels, I do not think we lost by the change, as it obliged us to coast the opposite shore of the gulf; it is impossible to witness a more beautiful country: this was still more rich than the one we followed in going to Nicomedia. It is true that at first we were

obliged to pass marshy fields, and sometimes even wade up to the breasts of our horses into the sea, to avoid the dangerous passes of the rocks which impeded our progress; but we could not pay too dearly for the charming prospect of numerous farms and handsome villages which we saw at every step.

All this part of the country is very populous, fertile, and well cultivated; producing figs, quinces, excellent melons, and various kinds of fruit, which serve to supply the capital; the grapes grown here are also of a superior quality.

Karamousal is a small town of three or four thousand inhabitants, nearly all Turks; it is situated on the borders of the gulf, nine leagues from Nicomedia, and did not seem to be very hospitable. The various lodgings offered to us were so filthy, that the ambassador determined on pitching his tent in the middle of a garden: for my part, I went with some of my companions to sleep in a Turkish coffee-house, raised on piles close to the sea. Some Janizaries who were going to the army of the Grand Vizir, and who at first mistook us for Russians, attracted by the coolness of the situation, conspired to drive us out and take possession of our beds; but the master of the coffee-house, expecting no doubt to derive more advantage from us than the interlopers, defended our interests with so much warmth that they were at length obliged to retire.

On the 14th in the morning, when we were

going to depart from this little town, an agent of Kara Osman presented himself to the ambassador, saying that he was commanded by his master to express the regret he experienced at the circuitous track we had been induced to take; particularly as he intended to have received him, with those marks of respect due to the minister of a great country. The same agent was the bearer of a compliment of another kind for our mehmandar. Kara Osman threw all the blame upon him, and threatened to cut off his head if ever he should fall into his power.

The heat was excessive when we left the town, and appeared the more insupportable, as on quitting the shores of the gulf to continue our journey inland, the country began to appear naked and waste. We found, however, to our no small satisfaction, some shady spots, and arrived rather early at Kiz Dervend, after a march of seven leagues and a half. Here we were agreeably surprised to find women walking with their faces uncovered, and men whose manners formed a singular contrast to those of the Asiatics. We were not less so in seeing the costume worn on the banks of the Danube, and on hearing the Sclavonian language spoken in a country to which we should have supposed it quite a stranger. Some information soon cleared up this apparent mystery. The inhabitants acquainted us they were of Bulgarian origin, and that the village was founded,

about a century ago, by an emigration of their ancestors, who had come to seek that happiness and tranquillity in Asia which they could not obtain in their own country. Their industry and that of their descendants soon made this little republic prosper: all the members of it appeared happy and contented; an air of comfort and prosperity was seen in their houses, where we met the most cordial hospitality. If it be true that idleness is the parent of every vice, they ought to be rare at Kiz Dervend, as all its inhabitants, both men and women, were occupied in useful labours: most of the latter were spinning hemp; and we learned from our hosts that corn and this article formed their chief wealth, as also their principal branches of trade.

The inhabitants of this village are Christians of the Greek church; on our approach they shewed neither distrust nor jealousy. Their women are handsome and well made, and we were permitted to converse with them as freely as with their husbands.

At a small distance from Kiz Dervend, on leaving a wood, we discovered the Lake Ascanius, which the Turks call Tchinizit-Geuli, and on its shore the little town of Poialidja. This lake discharges its waters into the sea of Marmora: its length is about eight leagues, by three in breadth; further on it washes the walls of Nicea, and is said to abound in fish. The borders of the Lake Ascanius are marshy and covered with reeds, and its

waters, though fresh, are by no means agreeable to the taste. The surrounding country produces a great number of olive trees, the fruit of which must be of ordinary quality, as this tree is better suited to a dry soil.

The excessive heat which prevails in this season obliges us to make short journies. We arrived this morning, after a march of five hours, at Nicea, or Isnik, and have already visited the most curious antiquities in it: we traversed the whole of the ancient boundaries of the city, and particularly that of the citadel, which is in very good preservation. The space occupied by the latter is desert and uninhabited; brambles and weeds grow amongst the gloomy fragments of those monuments overturned by time and barbarity, and which require only the hand of civilization to raise them again.

This afternoon we went to the church, where the first and seventh Œcumenical councils were held, one in 325, and the other in 787. The emperor Constantine presided at the former, and the Greeks religiously preserve the marble throne of that prince, which is to be seen in the sanctuary. With the exception of the principal entrance, and two small columns of nero-antico which support the baptismal fonts, this church has nothing remarkable, being both small and dark. The priest who acted as our guide made us stop before an alabaster tomb, which, as he said, contains the remains of the saint who founded

this temple, one of the most ancient of the Christians.

We have also seen two beautiful columns of porphyry at the door of a mosque, of which the minaret is covered with tiles of various colours. A lover of antiquities may find much to satisfy his taste at Nicea. The people continually offered medals, intaglios, and cameos, to which objects the Turks and modern Greeks attach no value: they may be bought here on very low terms, the venders being usually contented with the first price you offer them.

Nicea is a feverish and unhealthy residence; the exhalations from the lake are putrid and deadly; paleness is visible in every countenance, and from the languishing and sickly air of all the inhabitants, it gives one the idea of being in a vast hospital.

LETTER IV.

Road from Nicea to Angora.—The river Sacharia.—Ak-serai.—Balaban Zade.—Dere Bey.—Gheive.—Teraklu.—Torbalu.—Kiostebek.—Nalikhan,—Sivri-hissar.—Bey Bazar.—Aias.—Description of Angora.—Angora Goats.

Angora, Sept. 26, 1807.

WE entered the walls of Angora yesterday, but previous to saying any thing of this large city, I ought to indicate the road by which we came here. On leaving Nicea we directed our course towards Ak-serai, through charming woods of myrtles and pomegranates; but the sun being very powerful, their scanty shade was not sufficient to preserve us from the greatest heat we had yet endured. After having passed, by a ruined bridge, the Sacharia, which irrigates and fertilizes the fine plain of Ak-serai, we arrived in that town towards sun setting, having marched twelve hours.

Ak-serai, or the white palace, is so named from a large white house, which is seen for a distance of more than two leagues as you approach it. This place is small, and belongs to a Dereby, or feudatory prince of the Grand Signor, called Balaban Zade. There are many of these petty sovereigns in this part of Asia, and I shall soon

have occasion to describe one of the most powerful of them, through whose territory we are to pass.

The sovereignty of Balaban Zade extends over all this fine plain, which seems to be generally cultivated with care. It contains thirty-six villages of various sizes, and in one of them there is a bazar where all the traders of the country assemble once a week. The Sacharia divides it in several directions, and it is to this river that it owes its wealth. Cotton, sesame (a plant that gives a seed from which the Levant Jews press an oil for using in their food), and the juniper berry, are its most common productions. The cotton of Ak-serai is very much esteemed in commerce, a great quantity of it being annually sent to Smyrna, and from thence to Europe.

On the following day our journey was much shorter; we travelled only three leagues, and halted at Gheive, a village inhabited entirely by Mussulmen: the heat was still excessive.

The aga of Gheive who lives in a good house, had the civility to send the General some excellent fruits and ice. The dress of the Turks here is no longer the same as in Constantinople; the turban is very high, and flattened on the top; the men are armed with long pistols and poignards, and not a single female face is to be seen.

Teraklu, a town seven leagues from Gheive, where we rested on the 18th instant, is inhabited by fanatics. The firmans of the Grand Sig-

nor were at first rather ill received, and our mehmandar was obliged to go to the mehkeme or tribunal of the cadi, to obtain two houses for us, and from which the women were previously dislodged. The following occurrence may give you an idea of the disposition of the inhabitants of Teraklu, and of the reception met with from them by those who do not join in their religious belief: a dealer in sherbet refused to serve us with that beverage, although we offered him money beforehand, and it was impossible to obtain any thing from him but abuse, and the epithets of dogs, infidels, &c.

The name of this village is derived from the Turkish word terak, which signifies a comb, and, in fact, that article forms the only trade of the inhabitants, which, added to that of wooden spoons and other utensils, cannot procure them great wealth; the environs, however, are well cultivated, and covered with orchards.

On the 19th we slept at Torbalu, after a march of eight hours: before we arrived we had to climb over steep rocks, and go along a path of three feet wide, bordered on each side with frightful precipices. Torbalu is a small town of three thousand inhabitants, who are much more tractable than those of Teraklu. Here we found all the conveniences which could be reasonably expected on such a journey. This country is rich in corn and vineyards.

I shall not dwell long on the village of Kiostebek, nor on another place, called Nalikhan, where we stayed successively on the 20th and 21st, neither having presented any thing worthy of remark. In the first, one might suppose himself transported into Poland, from the manner in which the houses are built, composed of trunks of trees not squared, laid horizontally upon each other, also from the immense forests of firs and holm-oaks which we passed before arriving there. Our manner of travelling is one of the most fatiguing: no high road, always rough paths, and often mountains and precipices, where the least slip of a horse may cause instant destruction.

After a painful march of six hours, in a naked and arid country, we arrived on the 22d, at Sivri Hissar, a village where all the houses are built of clay, presenting at first sight, an aspect of the greatest misery; which induced us to prefer lodging in the stable of a large caravansery, near a rivulet which runs at the foot of the mountain.

A more particular examination soon convinced us, that the inhabitants of Sivri Hissar are not so wretched as we at first supposed. They grow wheat, barley, sesame, and manufacture small carpets, which serve the Mussulmen for kneeling on when at their prayers. Their territory produces excellent melons, of which the inside is green, and their goats resemble those of Angora. This country is as dismal as that through which we passed on the preceding days was smiling and agreeable. The view embraces nothing but

mountains of granite, whose dreary aspect is only tempered by the variety of their colours. There exists in the environs of Smyrna another village of the same name as the above.

We marched seven hours before we arrived at Bey Bazar. The populace of this town attacked us with a shower of stones, and the physician of the embassy had a narrow escape of becoming a victim to their fanaticism. When we arrived at the lodgings destined for us, it was necessary to drive away the assailants with cudgels, and close the doors to avoid farther insult.

Bey Bazar is twenty leagues from Angora. The town is built on an uneven situation, and is watered by a rivulet which runs into the river Aias. Ten leagues further, and after having crossed that river, we met a better reception in a town, to which it has given its name, at twelve hours march from Angora.

Here we are at length, having proceeded one hundred and twenty leagues journey. We made rather a long march yesterday, and the necessity of taking some repose, no less than the desire of visiting a celebrated city, have determined the ambassador to take a day's rest.

Angora is the ancient Ancyra. Invested by the Romans in the reign of Augustus, it passed with all Gallacia, under the domination of the conquering nation. The above emperor embellished Ancyra with a great number of monuments, the ruins of which still remain, and the Ancyreans dedicated a magnificent temple to him, to perpetuate their gratitude.

Tournefort estimated the population of Angora at forty thousand Turks, five thousand Armenians, and six hundred Greeks. But it is by no means so great at present; I do not believe it exceeds thirty thousand souls, including the Armenians, whose number surpasses that of the Mussulmen: there are also many Catholics and some Jews here.

Angora is situated on the declivity of a hill, at the extremity of a plain celebrated by the last victory of Tamerlane over Bajazet in 1399. This city is one of the most commercial in Asia; its bazars contain every thing that a traveller can desire; the most rare productions of the east, and a great deal of European merchandize being exposed for sale here. The shawls alone would be sufficient to enrich it: these are made from the hair of the Angora goat; their beauty surpasses that of the finest camblets. The valuable animals to which it owes this branch of industry, soon degenerate in other countries, as many experiments have demonstrated. I would not, however, attempt to assert, that with perseverance and continued care, they might not be naturalized in our climates.* But the inhabitants of Angora are so jealous of

* This is actually the case in France, where shawls made from the hair of these animals bred in Europe, were exposed, at the Louvre in August last, by Messrs. Ternaux and Son.—Ed.

what they consider with reason as the principal source of their prosperity, that it would be difficult not to say impossible to persuade them on this point. Owing to the many unfavourable chances which traders must encounter in such an enterprize, there is very little hope of its ever being attempted, so that the undertaking, if ever adopted, must be carried on in contraband.

Those shawls, of a softness equal to that of the finest silk, are of all colours. The Turks make summer dresses of them, and they seem to prefer those of a white colour. The same material also serves in the manufacture of extremely fine half stockings.

You would be surprised to see the numerous flocks of goats scattered on the plains of Angora: some are of an extraordinary stature for their species: the sight is enchanting, from their cleanliness and the dazzling whiteness of their fleeces, which often reach the ground. Outside a circumference of some leagues, every thing changes, when nothing but the common goats are seen.

Other animals besides the goats of Angora, divide the privilege of wearing a richer and more resplendent robe than that of the common species. Of this number are the beautiful cats so much admired in Europe, where they have become naturalized.

The crowd of curious persons, attracted by the singularity of a dress quite new to them, besieged us in a very inconvenient manner during

the first hours after our arrival; and the Turkish guards who were appointed to take care of us, were constantly occupied in throwing their clubs at the legs of those who approached too near our konak. However, when we walked through the town, and they could look at us without restraint, the people soon became accustomed to our dresses, and we did not suffer so much from their importunity.

The women of Angora appeared extremely beautiful: I allude of course to the Armenians, who walk about with their faces uncovered: as to the Mahometan females, it was impossible for us to discern their features, enveloped as they were from head to feet in a long piece of white linen, which effectually conceals their face and form from the sight.

We occupy an immense house, from which the proprietors have, no doubt, been driven. I have already given you notice that every thing here is done by violence, and each day presents new instances of it, but we are obliged to suffer what we cannot prevent.

The ambassador alighted at the house of a reputed physician, who called himself a Venetian: more recent information led to our knowing that he was a native of the Island of Cefalonia, and filled the office of British vice-consul. He is dressed in the oriental manner, and speaks Turkish tolerably well.

The Aga, or commandant of this city, has been

very distrustful, and did not pay all that deference to the embassy which we anticipated: buried, like those of his country, in the prejudices of fanaticism, he made a thousand difficulties in permitting us to visit the ancient monuments which cover the remains of Ancyra. The Turks cannot conceive what interest there is in examining the ruins of antiquity; they only see madmen, or a feeling of avarice in those who dig up treasures from amidst such melancholy vestiges. We could therefore only satisfy our curiosity imperfectly in this respect; for, being watched as dangerous and suspected persons, we merely gave a rapid glance at the objects which required a more calm and leisurely examination.

LETTER V.

Road from Angora to Josgatt.—Hairi Keui.—Kilislar Keui.—Kouroudjilik-soui a Stream.—The river Iris or Kisil Irmak.—Territories of Tchapan Oglou.—Aksakhan.—Baltchuk.--Kiatib Oucou.—A Stream of salt Water.—Wandering Turcomans.—Description of Josgatt.—Visit to Tchapan Oglou, &c.

Josgatt, Oct. 2, 1807.

On leaving Angora we proceeded towards the estates of this derebey, or feudatory prince, a vassal of the Grand Signor, of whom I promised you some information. From the 28th of last month, we have been in the territory of Tchapan Oglou. On the 27th, the day of our departure from Angora, we slept at Hairi Keui, a miserable village built of clay, ten leagues from that city.

On the 28th it was observed that three persons of the embassy were missing from the caravan. Our mehmandar, whose zeal had never once relaxed from the beginning of the journey, immediately set out to seek them: after two hours uneasiness and a fruitless inquiry in the village of Kilislar Keui, situated on a rivulet which the Turks call Kouroudjilik Soui, the ambassador determined to pursue his way, recommending the inhabitants to conduct the three stragglers to our next station.

We soon discovered, from the top of a hill covered with briars, the Iris, Kisil-Irmak, or Red River, which flows into the Black Sea, at four days journey from thence, and serves as a boundary to the territories of Tchapan Oglou. We forded it without any accident, and found a village called Aksakhan, on the opposite bank; the inhabitants of which have an air of prosperity and affability which surprised us very agreeably. We attributed these fortunate circumstances to the good government of their prince, who encourages agriculture and commerce, and does not exhaust the means of his subjects by the exactions of arbitrary imposts. The candour and simplicity of the early ages, together with the hospitable virtues, seem to belong to these worthy people, who enjoy the fruits of their labours in peace, without any fear of the rapacity and tyranny of a Pacha and his creatures. Crimes are never heard of amongst them, and the traveller may pass through this country without fear, as it has been cleared of those robbers who so generally infest the other roads of Turkey.

During the night we had the pleasure of seeing our three stray fellow travellers arrive, accompanied by the mehmandar. He had gone more than twenty leagues in search of them. One of them, who studied mineralogy, carried away by his favourite pursuit, had led the other two with him: they wandered about until they arrived at a large town, where our mehmandar succeeded

in finding them. It was now ordered that in future no person should separate from the convoy.

We slept at Baltchuk on the 29th; and on the 30th after having forded a small river, at Kiatib Ounon, a village surrounded with rivulets of salt water, we met in the morning, for the first time, a horde of wandering Turcomans encamped in the midst of a beautiful plain. These people are originally from the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea, and travel thus through various parts of Asia, with their families and flocks. It is asserted that they seize travellers when they can, in order to sell them afterwards in their own country; but they are more circumspect in these territories: however, from a prudent caution, we kept on our guard, closed our ranks and defiled before their camp, as if prepared to resist any aggression they might offer.

On the 1st we passed through a parched and arid country: no signs of cultivation were to be seen, excepting in the environs of villages. The heat is still great, yet less so than on the preceding days, and we have not had any rain from the commencement of the journey. We travelled fifteen hours and a half to reach Josgatt, where the embassy was to pass the night, and part of the next day.

At four leagues from this town, towards sunset, we met thirty horsemen well mounted and armed with long spears, who were sent by the Bey to compliment the ambassador. The Arme-

nian bishop and a physician, of Italian origin, also made part of the company: the latter was ordered to compliment the general in the name of Tchapan Oglou. It was not yet night, and the cavaliers never ceased capering round us, brandishing their lances, as long as day-light lasted; at length we entered the city by roads that were almost impassable. The inhabitants had come to receive us at the gates, holding torches of resinous wood, and thus conducted us to the house of a rich Armenian, who had already prepared a sumptuous feast in the manner of the country. This is the first town in which we have met with such a brilliant reception.

Josgatt is a recently established town, containing three or four thousand souls: it is well built, having bazars and caravanseries for travellers; it appeared also to have some trade. It is forty-eight leagues from Angora, and one hundred and sixty-eight from Constantinople.

It is truly pleasing to observe the happy effects of a government more prudent and enlightened than that of the other provinces of the Ottoman empire. The air of prosperity which appears in the town, the activity of its inhabitants, and the liberty which the subjects who are not Mahometans, enjoy, form an agreeable variety to the afflicting pictures of despotism we have so often under our eyes. But the satisfaction we experience in seeing the most precious rights of mankind less misunderstood and more respected,

can only be of short duration; having still a long way to go before we quit Turkey.

This day, at noon, we went to pay a visit to Tchapan Oglou. The Bey had previously sent his physician, several guards and horses to the ambassador. We lost no time in proceeding to his palace, all being anxious to see a Mussulman prince, who was no less respectable from his age, than from the prudence and justice of his government.

Having alighted from our horses in a large court, between a double line of cavalry, we were conducted up a handsome staircase into a well-lighted gallery of more than one hundred paces in length: a magnificent saloon terminated it, this was wainscoted, gilt, and furnished with sofas of Persian stuffs. Tchapan Oglou entered at the same time with us; he made the general sit by his side, and very gracefully invited us to place ourselves on the sofas. After the first compliments were over, we were served with pipes, sherbet, and coffee. The general presented a case of pistols richly ornamented, and many other productions of French industry to the Bey; and received two fine horses in return, one of which was destined for his brother.

Tchapan Oglou seemed to be about sixty-six years of age: his face, ornamented with a long white beard, is full of mildness and dignity. He can muster about thirty thousand cavalry, and has been able to make himself formidable to his

neighbours, and the Ottoman Porte itself, which caresses him and seeks his friendship; but his chief strength consists in a good and popular administration of the laws, the real support of his power, and source of his subjects' affection.*

In another hour we shall remount our horses, and continue our journey towards Tocat, from whence I hope shortly to address you.

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* Tchapan Oglou died the following year: his son succeeded to him in the government of this part of Asia Minor. All those derebeys or tributary princes of the Ottoman Porte, transmit their dignities to their children.

LETTER VI.

Road from Josgatt to Tocat.—Dichlidje.—Sourkoun.—Hadji Keui.—Kizildjik.—Zib.—Bazar Keui.—The River Tozanlu.—Description of Tocat, its Castle and Commerce.

Tocat, October 8, 1807.

The attentions and politeness of Tchapan Oglou to our ambassador, were not limited to the honours he rendered him in his residence: he also provided for his safety, and gave us another proof of his esteem, by ordering an escort of twenty of his cavalry, to accompany us to the frontiers.

We left Josgatt on the 2d instant in the afternoon: the weather was cloudy, and the coolness of the wind began to make us feel the influence of autumn. Towards the evening an abundant rain, the first we had seen since our departure from Constantinople, put our caravan in confusion. We dispersed in the midst of an unknown country, and I went to pass the night with three of my travelling companions, at the village of Dichlidje, where we had a stable for our quarters. The inhabitants of it could not give us any infor-

mation of the rest of the embassy, and it was only on the next morning that we found them in another village not far distant.

We saw nothing remarkable at Sorkoun, where we ended our third day's journey, except a dog of a prodigious size, considered a most formidable enemy of the wolves in those parts. We, however, contrived to insinuate ourselves into his good graces, and though belonging to a race that is difficult to be gained over by caresses, he was not insensible to ours. These animals are often seen in this province, they resemble our mastiffs, but are infinitely larger. We also saw some very fine greyhounds there.

Hadji-keui and Kizildjik were our two next stations. During the first of these marches which continued eleven hours, we saw a great many vineyards, and again met a band of Turcomans encamped with their families. In the second, which was for ten hours, we encountered others, but without the occurrence of any thing disagreeable. You must not, however, attribute our good fortune to the prudence or regularity that prevailed in our caravan; we are more fortunate than wise, and better order would certainly have been desirable in our march.

The country through which we passed before we arrived at Kizildjik is fertile and well cultivated. This village, inhabited entirely by Mussulmen, is in a beautiful situation, on a hill co-

vered with gardens and orchards. It is watered by an abundant and limpid rivulet, which supplies several fountains.

The manners of the inhabitants are mild and patriarchal: a good old man, with whom we lodged, invited us to enter his garden, and gather as much fruit as we thought proper: we found excellent melons, peaches, grapes, walnuts, and apples of an exquisite flavour. On leaving his house, we had great trouble in prevailing on our host to accept the collection we had made amongst us, in acknowledgment of his generous hospitality. Never before had he taken payment for the pleasure of obliging his fellow creatures. What would this worthy Mussulman have thought of us, had he known that in our more polished countries, hospitality is only to be had for its weight in gold!

On the morning of the 6th, at a short distance from Kizildjic, we perceived a fortified town in the distance to the left, which is said to be rather large. It is called Zil, and belongs to Tchapan Oglou, being the last strong hold on his territory. All this province is covered with numerous villages.

In the evening the caravan unloaded its baggage at Bazar Keui, a tolerably well built town, the population of which is about two thousand, all Turks. There are scarcely any more Greeks to be found in this district, the Armenians themselves being very scarce.

Bazar Keui,* is thus named from a bazar or market which is held there once a week. The inhabitants cultivate tobacco, and collect very good honey. At the entrance of this town we saw a vast caravansery built of stone, which is falling to ruin: the apathy and negligence of the Turks are every where the same; they suffer the greatest and most useful works to perish, with a carelessness which can scarcely be believed, if every step we take did not present new instances of it.

Yesterday, we followed the course of the Tosanlu, a fine river which waters the plain of Tocat, and runs to join the Kizil Irmak previous to its flowing into the Black Sea. At a league from the town, in a road bordered by gardens inclosed between dry stone walls, the horsemen and drums sent by the mutesellim waited for the ambassador. We entered the walls of Tocat at noon, where we shall remain the rest of the day; we are lodged at the house of a rich Armenian, from whom we have met a very good reception.

Tocat is the appanage of a sultana, who appoints the mutesellim or governor. It is a large and handsome city, containing thirty thousand inhabitants, Turks, Greeks and Armenians, built partly in a valley, and partly on the declivity of mountains which confine it on the north and south. The houses are large and of a fine ap-

* In Turkish the word keui signifies a village.

pearance, but instead of glass windows, they have only oiled paper pasted on the frames. Tocat is six days journey southward of Sinope two north of Sivas, and three south of Amasia. Its bazars present every resource for supplying our wants. It carries on a great trade in copper, which is much esteemed throughout Turkey: this metal is obtained from the mines of Gumuch Khané and Costambol. Silk, stuffs, and beautiful Morocco leather, are also manufactured here: its markets are full of excellent fruits produced in the surrounding country, and the Christians make tolerably good wine.

There are fewer remains of antiquity to be found here than at Nicea or Angora, but other monuments, more modern, attract the notice of the traveller. The most considerable amongst the latter is a Greek Church, which was probably once the Cathedral, although now converted into a mosque. It is situated in the principal square of the city, its cupola greatly resembles that of Saint Sophia at Constantinople, but it is on a smaller scale.

On the summit of a rock which commands the whole city, there is an old castle, where, during the war in Egypt, twenty French prisoners were confined, all of whom were officers and soldiers who had formed part of the garrison at Zante. Our unfortunate countrymen suffered a thousand torments there, and one of them, exhausted with the weight of chains he could no longer support,

freed himself from slavery by embracing the Mahometan religion. The rigour of the Turks to their prisoners of war, is such as may be expected from people who are strangers to every sentiment of humanity; and who set little or no value on the life of man: the religious fanaticism which directs them in their wars against the Christians, justifies, in their minds, the most barbarous treatment. Thrown into the bagnios with criminals, or shut up in damp dungeons, few Christians escape death, if they remain faithful to their country, for it is only by embracing Islamism they can hope to recover their liberty.

The Turks of Tocat are harsh and ferocious: I know not if their jealousy be more active and restless than in other places, but their women are covered with impenetrable veils. We were insulted several times in walking through the town and bazars: they even threw stones at us, and, upon the whole, we were never so much incommoded by the crowd of intruders at any other place.

LETTER VII.

Road from Tocat to Kara Hissar.—Ford of the river Tosanlu.—Neo Cesarea, or Niksar.—Ermeni Keui.—Robbers.—Kizil Geuziuk.—Melleum.—Janizaries.—Koule Hisar.—Endres.—Tchiflit, or farm of the Pacha of Erzerum.—Description of Kara Hissar, &c.

Kara Hissar, Oct. 15, 1807.

At a short distance from Tocat we forded the Tosanlu, and saw a curious grotto in a high rock, which bounds the road on the left. The situation of the place seems to indicate a tomb, which is still farther manifested by a Greek inscription engraved on the upper part of it. I ought in this place to borrow the language of poetry, to describe the enchanting scenes through which we passed during the remainder of this day; charming woods, whose verdure was still as fresh as in the spring; winding paths shaded by fine trees, which bent in natural arcades above our heads; the perfumes of a multitude of flowers and aromatic herbs, and the soft murmurs of a streamlet that formed cascades at every step, was the almost constant scene which presented itself to our view on the journey from Tocat to the Neo Cesarea of Cappadocia.

This town, whose name has been disfigured as usual by the Turks, is now called Niksar; it is situated on a very steep hill, eleven leagues eastward of Tocat: an old castle which is seen on its most elevated site, and the marshes by which it is surrounded, might contribute to its defence in case of need. It contains about one thousand inhabitants, of which half are Armenians and Greek Christians.

On our journey of the 11th, which was a march of ten hours, we passed through continued woods of firs, where there were also yews, wild apple and pear trees: we tasted the fruit of the latter, but found them very unpalatable. Here the smallest objects often awaken the most painful reflections: nature has done every thing for these countries: a more industrious nation would have taken advantage of her prodigality, and enriched itself in a short time from the innumerable benefits she has conferred on the people.

We terminated our day's march at Ermeni Keui, an Armenian village surrounded with rich pastures: during the night the cattle are put into inclosures near the houses, and guarded by dogs, which are really giants of their species. In the evening I was very near being the victim of their vigilance: in looking for the ambassador's quarters, I entered by mistake into one of those inclosures, and had to sustain a vigorous assault from one of these watchful guardians. I owed my safety to the assistance I received from the

owners of the house; for, had I taken to flight, I should infallibly have been devoured.

Ermeni Keui is the first village of the Pachalik of Erzerum. A thin rain, mixed with melted snow, occasioned us much inconvenience the next day, and made the roads very slippery: still it was necessary to pass over some mountains, and venture into large forests of firs. In one of these we met with robbers, whose air and accoutrements would have spread alarm amongst a less numerous and worse-armed troop than ours: as it was, we were not without some uneasiness for a part of our baggage that had remained in the rear, under a weak escort: but the presence of mind of our mehmandar contributed no doubt to save it. He pretended to be acquainted with the robbers, and to know whence they came: and therefore made them responsible for our effects, which he placed under their care; by this means they arrived safely in two hours after us at Kisil Guezluk, a village built on the declivity of high mountains, then covered with snow. We made large fires at this place to warm ourselves, and dry our clothes deluged with the rain. But we had not yet seen the last of our disasters: a heavy snow fell in the afternoon, and did not cease during the whole night and two following days.

As you have seen, it was but a short time since we enjoyed a temperature equal to that of the spring, so that you will be astonished to find us now exposed to all the severity of winter.

These contrasts are very frequent in Asia, and are generally met with in all countries covered with forests and mountains. For several days past we have been on a considerable elevation, and have still to ascend. On descending towards the valley of the Euphrates, we are led to believe we shall find a milder climate, and perhaps even heat.

On the 12th, the ground was covered with six inches of snow: when we left Kizil Geuzluk, it fell in such abundance, as to prevent our seeing objects only a few paces before us. The space within our view resembled an immense sheet of dazzling whiteness, and it had become impossible to distinguish the roads. We lost our way several times in the winding paths of the immense fir forests which cover these mountains, and we met some of those banditti, who, not deterred by frosts, post themselves in detachments for surprising the caravans. They did not, however, make any hostile attempt on us. I do not know whether it was our European dress that led to their forbearance, but it was often in their power to have plundered our stragglers.

Mellem, eight leagues from Kizil Geuzluk, was the termination of this march. It is a considerable town of Mussulmen, who are all enrolled in the militia of the janizaries. They informed us, in the boasting manner so peculiar to them, that they had furnished forty men in the last war, (to the 31st orta or regiment) who were considered the bravest of the whole corps.

There was some truth, but much more exaggeration in the relation they gave us of their exploits, which at most could only have imposed on children. Nothing can equal the abject state into which this corps has fallen, though it once formed the great strength of the Ottoman armies. Originally composed of the children of Christians, brought up in the Mahometan religion, their number was limited, and never exceeded a few thousands. The privileges that were either granted to them, or which they arrogated to themselves in the course of time, induced a great number of Mussulmen to enrol themselves in this corps, and by degrees nearly all the people have ended by getting incorporated into it. Amongst a civilized race subjected to discipline, and instructed in military tactics, such a militia would be invincible and formidable only to the enemy. It is not so in Turkey: as cowardly in war, as they are insolent and undisciplined during peace, the janizaries make none tremble but their sovereign, and the friends of order and tranquillity; it is here that those who ought to be the firmest supporters of the throne and the state have become the terror of the one, and the arbiters of the other.

The snow increased during the march of the following day: twenty times, at least, were we dispersed in the midst of a forest, without being able to find our way out. When at length extricated from this labyrinth, we found ourselves on the

summit of a mountain. Surrounded on all sides by thick clouds, we might be said to march over thunder: our horses stumbled at every step, and we had precipices on each side.

On leaving this disagreeable spot, a torrent rushing with violence through a ravine, threatened us with new dangers. Rain had succeeded to the snow, and the shoes of our horses, to whose caution we had abandoned ourselves, elicited sparks from the rocks: this was the only noise which broke the silence that now prevailed throughout the caravan. At length, worn out with fatigue, and drenched to the skin, we reached Koule Hissar, a town about ten leagues from Mellem, and situated on the bank of a river which bears the same name: all its inhabitants are janizaries, but we had every reason to be satisfied with our reception from them.

At the summit of a neighbouring rock is a castle, which seems to be abandoned.

Endres, where we slept on the 14th, is ten hours march from Koule Hissar. On leaving this town, we crossed the river by a stone bridge, and travelled along its right bank during several hours. Endres is built in the bottom of a fine plain, and backed by mountains which were then covered with snow: this village is rather large, all its houses are built with pebbles, and terraced. Three fourths of the inhabitants are Armenians. As for the Turks, they are intrenched on an eminence, round a tchiflit, or farm belonging to the

pacha of Erzerum. Some orchards, irrigated by a small stream, are scattered here and there at the foot of the hill.

When we had taken possession of our lodgings, we thought ourselves for a moment transported into Lapland: the peasants light their fires in the middle of the room, and the smoke issues out as well as it can, by a circular hole in the roof. While here they brought us apricots preserved in water, which were of a very agreeable flavour.

We were naturally impatient to leave the smoky dens in which we had passed the night, and very joyfully mounted our horses this morning, to pursue the journey. At two leagues from Endres, we again found ourselves in the region of clouds, and on a marly mountain, still more slippery than the former: owing to the damp air having penetrated all our dress, we were chilled from head to foot, and our horses could not take a step without slipping to the edge of a precipice. At noon, we descended into a valley intersected by the Koulé Hissar, which we crossed over a handsome bridge, the two extremities resting on the rock, while the middle is supported by two piles of bricks. After having re-entered the mountains, we at length arrived at Kara Hissar: this march continued during nine hours and a half. Kara Hissar, which signifies the Black Castle in Turkish, is built in the form of an amphitheatre, on a dark rocky mount, and at the summit of which there is a citadel. The mutesellim inhabits a

handsome house, surrounded with gardens, in the lower town. This place contains ten thousand inhabitants, amongst whom there are a few Greeks and Armenians. All the houses are terraced, but the streets are badly paved, dirty and narrow. There is a manufactory of sail cloth here, that is sent for sale to the ports of the Black Sea, which is not far distant.

An old Armenian merchant has received us hospitably here: we have just supped with him. The cordiality of this worthy man has made us forget the fatigues of the journey, but he did the honours of his table alone, as neither his wife nor daughters were present. Well matched with the Turks in point of jealousy, the Armenians sedulously guard their females from the sight of strangers. We are, however, assured that we shall be more fortunate in the Armenian villages, where we may even contemplate female countenances without veils.

LETTER VIII.

Road from Kara Hissar to Erzerum.—Zile.—Sabahktan.—Kerkif.—Dilemma of the Persian Ambassador.—Lory.—Pekerik.—Ford of the Euphrates.—Achkala.—Delis.—Elidja, source of hot water.—Fears of the Plague.—Description of Erzerum.—Feast given by Yousouf Pacha.—The Game of Djerid, a sham fight.—Second Festival near the Town.

Erzerum, Oct. 20, 1807.

We departed from Kara Hissar, on the 16th instant, and travelled eight leagues to reach a poor village called Zilé. On the 17th, after having passed through forests of pines and firs almost the whole day, we slept at Sabahktan, having marched twelve hours and a half.

On the 18th, the caravan halted at Kerkif, a large town of Turks and Armenians, where all the houses are constructed of stone. Here our baggage was encamped in a large square, under charge of the muleteers.

On the 19th, we were already half a league from Kerkif, when a servant of the Persian ambassador, who travels with us, came in a great fright to inform us that his master's lodgings were attacked by the Turks, who wanted to murder him and all his attendants. We immediately re-

turned to Kerkif, with the intention of endeavouring by all means to appease the disturbance, and try to withdraw Mirza Muhammed Riza, and his train, out of this dilemma. We soon perceived him at the door of his konak, surrounded by his servants, many of whom were wounded. He informed us that he had been refused horses, and that his suite had been ill-treated without cause. But he took care to conceal from us that they had been the first aggressors, and that their imprudence alone was the sole cause of his disaster. We were on the point of having a serious quarrel with the Turks, who would listen to no terms of accommodation, and who were very glad of this opportunity for gratifying their hatred against the Persians; already were new demonstrations of hostility displayed on each side, when, to our great satisfaction, peace was restored, and horses were at length obtained for the Persians. It was then noon, and this unpleasant affair was the cause of our losing five hours march.

Tolos and Pekerik, our two following stations, presented very different aspects. In the former place we saw a picture of the most frightful misery, and in the second, an air of comfort and cleanliness which very agreeably surprised us. The houses of this village are larger and better built than in the other parts of the country; and a spring of excellent water, which rises from the foot of a rock, procured us enjoyments which

many persons, in a different situation from ours, might perhaps have despised. About two leagues on this side of the village, we forded the Euphrates, which the Turks simply call Frat.

On the 22d, we again forded the above river, and travelled along its bank during part of the day: we ended our day's march at Achkala, an Armenian town, in which are also some Mussulmen. A detachment of delis, a kind of light cavalry, came to levy contributions on the unfortunate inhabitants: though it was said they had pillaged several caravans on their passage, they offered no violence to our party.

We passed the night at Achkala, two of my travelling companions and myself, in the house of a poor Armenian peasant, where we slept promiscuously on the same carpet with his wife and daughters. This honest villager had little idea of the torments of jealousy, and we took good care not to abuse his confidence.

We have marched sixty hours from Kara-Hissar. On leaving Achkala, the Euphrates is passed by a bridge solidly built of brick. A thick snow, brought by a strong north wind, benumbed all our limbs from the beginning of this day's march: we arrived half frozen at Elidja, three short leagues from Erzerum. There is a source of mineral water at Elidja, much celebrated for the cure of rheumatism. It is not shut up, but merely surrounded with a small circular wall, and always open to the public. The water issues in

a considerable body from the center of the basin, its heat being sufficient to boil an egg in a few minutes.

We have been two days at Erzerum. The alarm we experienced from the report of the plague, which we had been informed was ravaging this large city, induced the general to dispatch an officer to obtain information on the subject; the result would have been a change in the direction of our journey, if his report had been unfavourable. We found the officer thus deputed, near the gates, with a numerous escort, sent by Yousouf Pacha to meet the ambassador. We were now assured that the contagion had almost entirely ceased, and that we might safely take some days repose at Erzerum. Somewhat encouraged by this news, which was not, however, precisely in conformity to the truth, it was decided that we should halt here, and accordingly the ambassador made his entry amidst an immense crowd, who were assembled from all quarters to see us pass. We were conducted in great state to the house of a rich Armenian, where all the apartments were placed at our disposal; our luggage being deposited in magazines under the usual care of the muleteers.

Erzerum, the capital of Turkish Armenia, is, next to Bagdad, the largest city of Turkey in Asia. Tournefort observes with good reason, that it is not situated in the Euphrates, as many geographers place it, but rather in a peninsula formed

by the sources of this river. Erzerum is at the extremity of a large plain, where there is not a tree to be seen, and backed by high mountains, which render its climate very severe. It is not unusual to see snow fall here in May, and even in June.

Erzerum is more than three hundred leagues from Constantinople, and about sixty from the Persian frontiers. It is supposed to contain more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, and is one of the most opulent cities in Asia, from its commerce in copper, furriery, madder, drugs, &c. which attract a great concourse of foreigners, especially Persians. Its bazars are the largest and best furnished of any we have seen since our departure from Constantinople; but, with the exception of a very few, the streets are dirty and badly paved, and the air in the neighbourhood of the slaughter houses, must be deadly in times of contagion. The plague carried off as many as four hundred persons each day, previous to our arrival; and we now know, from good information, that it is not yet extinct.

This city is surrounded with high walls, and deep ditches; the seraglio or palace of the Pacha forms a second fortress in the center of the first. The suburbs without the ramparts are chiefly inhabited by Armenian artizans.

The territory of Erzerum would produce all kinds of grain in abundance, if better cultivated; in that case the severity of the winters would not

be an obstacle to its fertility, merely causing the harvests to be later than elsewhere. This plain, where the land seems in general to be good, has also the advantage of being irrigated by the waters of the Euphrates, which, proceeding from a chain of mountains, bounds it to the east and west, and then takes a south-eastern direction.

Yesterday we dined with Yousouf Pacha: the feast was long and splendid: the first course consisted of honied and sugared pastry; the second of meat and stuffed fowls, and the third of pilaw of several kinds. The pilaw is nothing but rice boiled in water, but without letting it lose any of its substance; it is then seasoned with a little butter, coloured with saffron, and served up in a pyramidical form on large copper dishes tinned: wine only was wanting in the pacha's excellent repast: but his religion prohibited its use, and as that of Erzerum is not drinkable, we lost little by it.

After dinner, the pacha invited the ambassador and his suite to go into the next apartment, where we placed ourselves at the windows, to witness the exhibition of the djerid,* and a sham fight

* The djerid is a white stick, two feet and a half long, which the Turks use at their military games, in the manner of a javelin. The whole art of the horseman consists in throwing it at his adversary, who on his part returns a similar, whilst he endeavours to ward off the blow. Though the djerid is not armed with iron, this exercise is not without some danger, and there are frequent occurrences of accidents in it.

performed in the principal court of the seraglio, with all the disorder and confusion peculiar to the military exercises of the Turks.

Yousouf Pacha is about seventy years of age, and by birth a Georgian; he has been twice grand vizier,* and in that capacity commanded the Ottoman armies in Egypt and Syria. Although Yousouf lost an eye in his youth, at the game of djerid, this defect does not diminish the nobleness and expression of his countenance, ornamented by a long white beard. For two years past he has commanded at Erzerum with absolute power. This pachalik, one of the most considerable of Turkey in Asia, or, indeed, the whole Ottoman empire, is extremely productive from its trade, and of the utmost importance by its vicinity to the frontiers. I should add, that Yousouf Pacha is very popular.

There have been brought to us to-day, by his order, similar provisions to those which were served yesterday in his palace, and he sent an

* Yousouf Pacha has been a third time appointed grand vizier, since our first passage through Erzerum. After a long and brilliant career, he has been again deposed, and banished to Demotica in Romelia. I do not know whether he is still living, but I doubt whether his great age will permit him ever to re-appear at the head of affairs. Such is the fate of almost all the great men in Turkey; the most important services rendered to their country do not save them from the disgrace and caprice of their masters: they often finish by yielding to the efforts of their enemies, and exile or death are the recompences of their long labours.

invitation for the whole of the embassy to meet him outside the walls, to witness another festival. We therefore went out of the town in the afternoon, and were received in a beautiful tent lined with silk stuff, and pitched on the borders of a rivulet. The Pacha arrived soon afterwards, surrounded by a brilliant escort of cavalry and musicians.

When he had taken his place on a sofa, the general being on his right hand, and the Persian ambassador on his left, the game of djerid and the sham fight recommenced, and lasted more than two hours. When the latter terminated, the cavalry feigned an attack on the tent in which we were, and setting out at full gallop with their lances pointed, they stopped suddenly on the bank of the rivulet which separated us from them. The Turks are great admirers of this exercise, and soon ruin the best horses, by checking them thus by force when at full speed.

After the Pacha had caused a considerable sum to be distributed amongst the actors in these two shows, he mounted his horse, in order to give the ambassador an idea of his own talent: when taking a djerid, he threw it several times to a great distance. An unfortunate circumstance, however, diminished the pleasure he experienced on renewing an exercise which he had passionately loved in his youth: in the midst of his efforts, a large diamond fell from the hilt of his dagger, and it was impossible to find it again.

Our party afterwards separated from his, and to give him time to return to the palace, we rode round the city: the day was terminated by our visit to take leave. Yousouf Pacha wished the ambassador to remain several days longer; but on the general's observing, that his mission to Persia was urgent, he no longer pressed him, and consented, though reluctantly, to our departure.

On returning this evening to our lodgings, each of us found a handsome horse, which was a present from the Pacha. Such were the honours rendered at Erzerum to a French ambassador. If we have occasionally had to complain of the little respect of the subaltern governors, we have always had cause to be satisfied with the attentions of those in a more elevated rank.

LETTER IX.

Road from Erzerum to Baiazid, the last frontier town of Turkey in Armenian Asia.—Alvare.—Hassan Kalé.—The Araxes.—A Spring of hot Water—Jaian.—Deli Baba.—Tomb of a Pacha.—Mala Suleiman.—Toprak Kale.—Armenians, Catholics.—Kara Kilisia, or the Black Church.—Iandjalu.—Curdes.—Origin of that Wandering People.—Their Robberies.—Utch Kilisia, or the Three Churches.—Mount Ararat, or Agri Dagh.—Diadin.—Description of Baiazid.—Visit to Ibrahim Pacha, Governor of that City.

Baiazid, Nov. 3, 1807.

It was not without some regret we quitted a city where we had been so well received. We departed from Erzerum on the 27th ultimo, at eleven in the forenoon, escorted by twenty-five men of Yousouf Pacha's guard: towards noon, a detachment of Delis, that we perceived in the plain, sent two men to reconnoitre us. We reached Alvare at three: this is an Armenian village, not far from Hassan Kalé, a strong town of about five thousand souls, near the borders of the Araxes, four leagues from Erzerum, where there is a spring of hot water, like that of Elidja. We halted the next day at Jaian, eight leagues further.

All the villages we passed through on the 29th were infected with the plague. We, however, consented to stop at Deli Baba, on the assurances

which were given that it had till then escaped the attacks of a scourge which threatened us from every side. This place, which is extremely dismal in itself, presents nothing remarkable except the tomb of a Pacha: this is covered with green and red veined marble. We found several detachments of troops there, on their return from Baiazid, and who asked us a thousand questions on the state of the war in Europe.

The Turks of our escort obliged us to remain a day at Deli Baba, under pretence of the danger there would be in meeting the troops coming from Baiazid. If we had taken their advice, we should have remained there more than eight days: fortunately the general determined otherwise, and we resumed our journey on the 31st, early in the morning.

From Deli Baba to Toprak Kale, there are fifteen hours march. It is at first necessary to clear a very narrow defile, formed by rocks which often serve as asylums for the Curdes. It is dangerous to meet with them when travellers are few, or badly armed, but we were not in that predicament. The road becomes better, according as you approach Mala Suleiman, a village inhabited by Catholics, who are rather numerous in this part of Armenia. At length we reached Toprak Kale, a little town situated on the declivity of a hill, crowned with a mud fort.

Toprak Kale, which signifies the earthen castle,

contains six hundred houses, built in the same manner, and terraced. The chief part of its inhabitants, like those of all the towns and villages of this province, are Armenian Christians, who are mild and hospitable. A Curde Aga, intrenched in the mud fort, which commands the town, governs there, and makes the inhabitants severely feel his harsh and despotic authority.

We begin to find the weather hot again. On the 1st, the ambassador gave another of the legation and myself, a commission for Mala Suleinam, through which we had passed the preceding evening. We therefore took the direction of that village, accompanied by a Tartar. I have already mentioned, that the inhabitants of it were Armenians and Catholics: the conformity of our faith to theirs, obtained a very good reception for us from the priest, who offered us breakfast. As poor as the first apostles, this worthy clergyman informed us that the dearness of wine, and difficulty of procuring it in a country where it is very scarce, had prevented him, for three months past, from celebrating divine service. Sympathizing in his complaints, we with pleasure gave him a small skin of Erzerum wine, and departed loaded with his blessings. At ten o'clock we reached Toprak Kale on our return; but the general had departed long before, and we in consequence redoubled our speed to rejoin him. We

were well mounted, and never were the horses of Yousouf Pacha more useful to us, than on this occasion.

At two hundred paces from Toprak Kale, about thirty Curdes, who were in ambush behind a little hill, fired a general discharge at us; by the greatest good fortune, none of their shots took effect: as there were only three of us, badly armed, it would have been difficult to escape them, were it not for the swiftness of our horses. All this plain is fertile, well cultivated, and covered with numerous villages, many of which are inhabited by Catholics. An Armenian priest of the Propaganda, who had lived several years at Rome, entered into conversation with us at the entrance of a little hamlet. Agreeably surprised to find a man, in this country, who spoke Italian much more purely than ourselves, we forgot that we were in such great haste. He had quitted Italy for voluntary exile in a country which is a prey to anarchy, and the continual incursions of robbers. We could not forbear admiring such zeal; but he was unwilling to admit the justice of our praises, and his modesty seemed to equal his other virtues. Honoured with the respect and esteem of his parishioners, he could not conceive that it was possible to enjoy more real happiness on earth.

We learned at Kara Kilisia, (the Black Church) that the ambassador had passed through it some time before, and would conclude his day's journey

at Iandjalu, two leagues further on, where we also arrived soon afterwards.

Iandjalu, and all the villages of this plain, were completely pillaged, two days before, by the Curdes, who infest this unfortunate country. Oppressed, like the Greeks, and like them incapable of opposing the least resistance to the violence of those barbarians, who prohibit them from possessing arms, the Armenians bear patiently, and without daring to utter a complaint, the most revolting outrages.

The Curdes are a wandering people, originally from Arsacia: their usual residence is in Kurdistan, which comprises a part of Armenia Major, Diarbeker, or Mesopotamia, and extends on the east as far as Persia, and on the south to the environs of Bagdad. According to some authors, the Curdes are descendants of the famous assassin, mentioned by William of Tyre, in his History of the Holy War. Their primitive religion was that of the ancient Persians: they adored the sun, and prostrated themselves before that planet at its rising and setting. They afterwards embraced Mahometanism, according to the doctrine of Ali, and for some time leaned even to Christianity, for which they would have perhaps declared, were it not for some causes of discontent they had with the Christians, then masters of Palestine. Their chiefs or sheiks are designated *old men of the mountains*, by contemporary writers. It is asserted that they had formed schools where youth were taught only maxims of villainy; and that by means of the eternal happiness which was promised to them as the price of their obedience and devotedness, those young assassins found means of penetrating the palaces and camps of Christian and Mussulman princes, to destroy them. United afterwards with the crusaders against Melek Echraf, Sultan of Egypt, they were involved in their defeat. Obliged to quit Palestine and Syria, they soon dispersed in the various countries where we now see them. A great number went to establish themselves in Diarbekir; some mixed with the Bedouin Arabs, and others abandoned themselves to wandering and vagabond lives in the parts of Armenia through which we travel.

Their spirit of plundering never permits them to remain long in the same place: they live either in tents, or the open air, carrying off women, flocks and harvests, and reducing to slavery, or murdering, without pity, the men of all ages. Most of them are mounted, armed with a long lance, a shield of osier covered with leather, sabre, carbine and pistols. Their dress varies according to the districts: here they wear large trowsers of white cotton, a vest of the same stuff, and a haba, or cloak of coarse woollen cloth, striped black and white, which shelters them from the rain. Their heads are covered with a fez, or bonnet of red wool, that hangs over their

shoulders, and round which they generally wrap a white turban.

On the 2d in the morning, and at a short distance from Iandjalu, we met numerous and well armed caravans. Further on, the remains, still smoking, of several villages, would have been sufficient to inform us of the fresh outrages of the Curdes, had not a crowd of unfortunate Armenian women, flying with their children, told us that a considerable body of these robbers had just murdered their husbands and sons, burnt their dwellings, and pillaged a caravan on the road which we had to pass. This intelligence was not lost on us, as we immediately closed in upon our baggage, and prepared for the worst.

We soon discovered in the plain, at a quarter of a league on the right, about two hundred Curdes on horseback: some of them advanced towards us to reconnoitre, but they soon returned in a gallop to their comrades, and as they probably gave them an account of what they had seen, we were not attacked. We passed through the village, whose unfortunate inhabitants we had met: it was still in flames; and we saw nothing on all sides but pictures of death and desolation. We afterwards proceeded to the Three Churches, or Utch Kilisia, which we felt some curiosity to see. The inhabitants, alarmed at the sight of a numerous troop, which they supposed to be a band of Curdes, made a general discharge of their musketry

at us; but fortunately no one was wonnded. We, however, continued to advance, and our mehmandar could not cause this running fire to cease, until he had displayed a white handkerchief at the top of a long pike. The Armenians having at length recognized, by our dress, that we were not enemies, we were permitted to approach.

Utch Kilisia is surrounded with thick walls, and defended by towers, where sentinels watch day and night: on the least alarm, the whole village assembles, and the fire of musquetry, added to that of some small pieces of artillery, is a terror to the Curdes, making them respect this district. In the center of the little fortress is the convent of the Three Churches, also surrounded with walls: its gates are of iron of a prodigious thickness. The monks who inhabit it, are about forty in number, and in their exterior resemble soldiers more than ministers of the gospel. Armed with pistols and long carbines, they also keep watch like the villagers, and are not the worst defenders of the place.

We passed through the court yard of the convent between a double row of these warlike monks, who permitted us to visit their cells and church. The latter, large and well built, is surmounted with a steeple, a rare thing in Turkey. The interior is shabbily decorated: very indifferent pictures, representing various subjects analogous to religion, compose all its ornaments.

Utch Kilisia was founded more than a century ago, by a prince named Heraclius of Georgia, who placed it under the protection of Saint Gregory.*

From the Three Churches is discovered, at several leagues distance on the left, the double summit of Mount Ararat, called by the Turks Agri Dagh. We finished this day's march at Diadin, having travelled twelve hours. Diadin is a large fortified town, inhabited by Turks and Armenians. Its earthen ramparts had not preserved it from an invasion of the Curdes very lately; and our unfortunate Armenian host had lost his wife a few days before, assassinated in an atrocious manner by one of those villains.

To-day we have been enabled to contemplate Mount Ararat in all its magnificence; the sky was clear and cloudless, and every thing favoured our impatient desire to see this celebrated mountain. Its head, covered with eternal snow, is most frequently hidden in the clouds, and no mortal has ever yet been able to ascend beyond a third of its height. The Armenians say that Noah's Ark rested there, and if credit can be given to the

* There are two convents in Armenia of the name of Utch Kilisia, or Three Churches. The principal is on the northern side of Mount Ararat, at a short distance from Erivan. It is the residence of the Armenian patriarch, who, in their language, is called Ekmiazin.

assertions of the monks who inhabit a monastery situated on the declivity of the mountain, its remains are still there! This belief, carefully instilled by them into the minds of all the eastern Christians, is said to produce considerable sums from the numerous pilgrims who visit their convent. It would be difficult to ascertain this fact; but we took good care not to raise the smallest doubt of its existence in the minds of our worthy Armenians.

We have had very bad roads to this place, which we reached at five o'clock. The Armenian bishop, and three or four hundred horsemen, sent by the Pacha, came to meet the ambassador a league from this city. The richness of their dress and arms, the picturesque manner in which they grouped around us, and the site itself, have furnished Mr. Preaux, an able draughtsman in the legation, with the subject of a sketch which may some day form the groundwork of an interesting picture.

Baiazid is the last town of Turkey, in the Armenian portion of Asia: it is three hundred and sixty leagues from Constantinople, and three from the Persian frontier. Built like an amphitheatre, on the declivity of a very steep rock, its position is impregnable, and in proper hands could never be taken, except by famine. This town contains from twelve to fifteen thousand inhabitants, of which the greater part are Armenians. All the houses are built of clay, and it is impossible to

take a step in the streets without ascending or descending at the risk of your neck. The Pacha's palace is situated in the highest part of the town, on a fortified rock. A mosque, built on the declivity of the hill, is the only edifice worth remarking.

Baiazid is defended by four different forts, one of which is at the foot of the mountain. The Armenians have the privilege of bearing arms; and, owing to the small number of Mussulmen who compose the garrison, some of the posts have been confided to them. It was in one of these forts that M. Jaubert was imprisoned for eight months, by order of Mahomoud Pacha, who commanded at Baiazid two years ago, when that unfortunate envoy was sent on a mission to Persia.

This evening we paid a visit to the governor, Ibrahim Pacha: he received the general in a large hall, by the gloomy light of two wax candles. The appearance of the place, and the people who surrounded it, might have induced us to suppose we were in a cave of robbers. Ibrahim fears the Curdes, and seldom leaves his palace: he is a Pacha of two tails; but his power does not extend beyond the town, as the robbers who infest his pachalik, do not acknowledge the authority of the Grand Signor, merely paying a small tribute to the King of Persia, to avoid being molested by that prince.

We have now accomplished more than the half of our journey, and shall quit the Ottoman territory to-morrow. Our Persian fellow travellers are in raptures, so that we shall soon be enabled to ascertain how far we ought to believe the brilliant descriptions which they give us of their country.

LETTER X.

Road from Baiazid to Khoi.—Entry into Persia.—Kilisia, Kendi, or Havadjik, ArebDilesi.—Kara Ina.—Zorava.—Death of Mr. Bernard, Aid-de-Camp to the General.—Arrival at Khoi.—Festival given by Hadji Muhammed Khan, Governor of the Town.—Persian Dancers.

Khio, Nov. 8, 1807.

Our first steps on the Persian territory have been marked by a mournful event, which we were very far from expecting. We had supposed ourselves completely free from danger of the plague, when an aid-de-camp of the general's, M. Bernard, suddenly fell a victim to that dreadful disease. He died yesterday, and we have this day performed the last sad offices to him.

On leaving Baiazid, we had to pass naked and barren mountains: after four hours march, we descended into a more level, but not less sterile country. We were now in Persia: nothing could have induced us to suppose we had passed

* Distances in Persia are counted by Fersenks or Parasangs. The Fersenk is also in use in India, it is nearly equal to a league and a half, of twenty-five to a degree. However, not to confuse the estimate of distances, by employing two different modes of measurement, I shall continue to indicate our progress on this journey by hours of march or leagues.

the frontiers, if our guides had not taken care to inform us of it. The first Persian village we saw, is called Kilisia Kendi: it is inhabited by poor Armenians and Curdes, who are under greater restraint there than in Turkey.

Towards evening we arrived at Arab Dilesi, another village defended by a fort, erected on a rock which commands it. Here we found wine, and a considerable quantity of fruits and refreshments, sent to the legation of Prince Abbas Mirza, governor of Tauris and the province of Azerbaidjan, in which we now are. The cadi had also come out about two leagues to meet the ambassador. This day's journey was seven hours march. Areb Dilesi is inhabited by a mixture of Persians and Curdes.

On the following day we saw numerous encampments of this wandering people. Notwithstanding their robberies on the territory of the Grand Signor, they are moderate and circumspect on those of the King of Persia. As already stated, they pay a tribute to this monarch, who has taken them under his special protection. The Curdes, natural subjects of the Grand Signor, are too distant from the capital of the Ottoman empire to have any thing to fear from a weak government, the influence of which now merely extends to a few leagues in circumference. Close to the Persian frontier, they have every thing to fear from the armies of the prince who governs in

this district; and, by a compact equally advantageous to the two parties, they have placed themselves under subjection to the king, who can employ them with advantage in his wars against the Turks.

On the same day we met an envoy from the Pacha of Erzerum, who was going to Abbas Mirza: he joined our caravan, and we shall travel together as far as the capital of Azerbaidjan. We slept at Kara Ini, eight leagues from Areb Dilesi: there are still some Armenians to be seen here. All the towns and villages of this part of Persia, near the frontiers, are defended by little mud forts: on advancing into the country, there are many villages and ruined caravanseries to be seen.

At two leagues from Khoi, on the border of a stream which runs from the mountains, we found a splendid collation, sent to the embassy by the Khan, who governs this town. We soon descended into a magnificent plain, where we met the Khan himself, who came to meet the ambassador: he was accompanied by a numerous suite, and by M. Bontems, a French captain of engineers, who had been in Persia for some months.

We entered the walls of Khoi at three: two hundred Persian soldiers, disciplined in the Russian manner, by a major of that nation, were drawn out in the principal square; they presented arms, and the drums beat when the general passed their front.

Khoi is situated in the middle of a well cultivated plain, covered with trees and gardens; it is surrounded with high brick walls, and all the streets have little channels of fresh water, which produce an agreeable coolness; they are also bordered with plane trees or poplars: the houses are built of clay, and have generally but one story. This town suffered much some years ago, from an earthquake, which completely ruined several of its streets: however, it still contains twenty-five thousand inhabitants. Were it not for this disaster, the beauty of its situation, and fertility of its soil, (one of the most productive in all Persia,) would have, no doubt, attracted a much greater number.

A magnificent feast was prepared for us at the Khan's, in a saloon on the ground-floor, opening to the garden; and all the avenues were guarded by Russian and Persian soldiers. The banquet was long, and animated by music: Persian dancers were also engaged to enliven the scene.

Lascivious postures, varied to infinity, composed all the art of those dancers, who are generally boys—their profession, despised as it is by the Persians, is however very lucrative. Cloyed in very early life with all kinds of enjoyments, the nobility know no better means of amusing their satiety, and they never have a festival at home without this brutal accompaniment.

Those dancers are dressed in female habits, and hold metal castanets in each hand: they gene-

rally begin their exercises by various feats of strength and agility; then, changing their gestures and movements, they exhibit all that debauchery and luxury ever invented by the most refined profligacy.

LETTER XI.

Road from Khoi to Tauris.—Lake Ouroumie or Mouraga.—Tesoutch.—Chebister.—Maian.—Salt River.—Tauris, the capital of Azerbaidjan.—Audience of the Chah Zade.—Abbas Mirza.—Festival given by that Prince.—Ruins.—Theriakis, &c.

Tauris, Nov. 15, 1807.

By the original arrangements at Constantinople with our mehmandar and Turkish muleteers, they were only to conduct us to the frontiers of Persia: however, as Khoi did not afford all the resources we could have desired, to remount our new caravan there, we merely changed some of our worst horses, and it was agreed that the Turks should conduct us to Tauris.

We left Khoi on the 9th, in the afternoon, escorted by a great number of Persians, who accompanied us some distance: we soon lost sight of the beautiful plain in which this city is situated, to enter a range of mountains, whose sterility can be compared only to those in the neighbourhood of Baiazid. When we reached their summit, the view of Lake Ouroumie, which we perceived at our feet, caused a most agreeable

surprise: the Persians call it Deriai Chahi, or the Royal Sea: in fact, this lake merits the above name by its great extent, its circumference being at least one hundred and twenty leagues: to the eye, its limits are lost in the distant horizon. There are several islands in this lake, the largest of which is called Adai Chahi, or the Royal Island: our Persian companions informed us that it was inhabited, and contained several villages. Another called Kiasoun Kale, is not so large; the remainder of this little Archipelago is composed only of islets or uninhabited rocks.

The waters of the Lake Ouroumie do not contain any fish; they are fetid and bituminous, and the surrounding countries must suffer much from their noxious exhalations, which are so strong, that our horses refused to advance, when we wished to approach nearer to its banks, which are very marshy. We could only satisfy our curiosity by going on foot: the Persians also told us that two small boats alone served for communication between the islands and the main land.

After a march of seven hours, we arrived at Tesoutch, a town surrounded with gardens, at a short distance from the lake. The houses are well built, and every thing bespeaks a degree of prosperity which is not always found in Persia, even in cities. The kalenter, a kind of mayor, received us in his house, and gave us a good

supper. Some houses in Tesoutch had been thrown down a short time before by an earthquake.

We had new alarms in this place, but fortunately they were unfounded. The death of M. Bernard had renewed our uneasiness relative to the plague, and though we had burnt all his effects at Khoi, the least indisposition which occurred in the caravan, seemed to be the effect of that horrible disease. A relation of the ambassador, oppressed for a long time with the ague and fatigue, was delirious in the evening, and we thought ourselves on the eve of again losing a comrade; but happily it was a false alarm: the next day he found himself better, and even able to continue his journey.

On the 10th we travelled seven leagues. We found some refreshments under a tent, pitched on the borders of the lake, by the order of the magistrates of the country: wherever we passed, these officers were anxious to render the general the same honours as to the princes of the royal family and persons of the highest distinction. In the afternoon we entered Chebister with a numerous escort of horsemen and musicians.

Chebister is a neat little fortified town, eleven leagues from Tauris. It contains a quadrangle, surrounded with a gallery supported by pillars of wood, and covered with reeds; the inclosure is occupied by shops, the whole of which form a bazar. The environs are well cultivated, and

there are a great many trees and gardens about it: this is, in fact, one of the most agreeable places we have seen since our entrance into Persia.

On the 11th we were much surprised to find the ground covered with a thick snow, which, drifted by a freezing north wind, still fell in large flakes: the temperature of the previous evening had been very mild, and we thus passed suddenly from autumn to winter.

From Chebister to Tauris, the road runs through a mere desert, almost every where covered with salt, nor is there any other than salt water found there: we tried it at Maian, a village situated on the borders of a small river. The magistrates of Tauris, and principal personages of the court of the Chah Zade, were in waiting for our ambassador there, and we made our entry into the city, in the midst of a brilliant train, at three in the afternoon.

Tauris, the capital of Azerbaidjan, the ancient Media, is the residence of Prince Abbas Mirza, third son of the king of Persia. It is at the foot of Mount Orontes, in the bottom of a plain watered by the Spingt Chah, a river which passes through the city, and the Adji, a salt rivulet that runs to the north: this is one of the largest cities in Persia. Chardin reckoned fifteen thousand houses, and as many shops here. At present its population is very much diminished, and does not exceed fifty or sixty thousand souls, including some Armenians. Several travellers

have asserted that Tauris was the ancient Ecbatana; but their opinion has been successfully combated by others, who agree in placing the capital of Media in the modern city of Hamadan, in Persian Kurdistan. Tauris is surrounded with high walls, flanked by towers and defended with ditches. A castle, called Kalai Rachidié, served to protect it on the east, but it has fallen into ruins, as well as others, scattered about the neighbouring plains. The town is subject to earthquakes; to preserve it as much as possible from those disasters, the houses have but one story, and often merely a ground floor: the edifices here are built of sun-dried bricks, and their fronts do not turn towards its narrow and unpaved streets. The palace of the prince is the most remarkable building here, but even that is very simply decorated. In the first court, which is a spacious and regular square, there are some old pieces of cannon mounted on bad carriages: these serve to hold the inhabitants in awe, in the event of any symptom of revolt.

In the environs of Tauris many ruins lie in fragments, occasioned by a dreadful earthquake which happened in 1559; the most interesting are those of a beautiful mosque, entirely encrusted with jasper, alabaster and marble of various colours. The continued devastations and convulsions to which this country is exposed must have discouraged the inhabitants from building many similar edifices. It is for this reason, no

doubt, that there are so few monuments seen in Persia, to perpetuate the glory of past times.

Tauris is one of the most commercial cities in Persia: it contains manufactories of gold and silk stuffs, cotton cloths, shawls, and printed calicoes. Its climate is very cold, and the snows with which the adjacent mountains are covered, during almost the whole year, must tend greatly to prolong the severity of the winters. The temperature, however, appears variable, and subjected to frequent alterations: the north wind blew with violence on the first days after our arrival, and frost and snow are the consequences of it; since yesterday, the weather has become milder, and to-day the heat of the sun can scarcely be borne.

The first day of our arrival was destined to repose, or surveying the city and its bazars. The ambassador had various conferences with the ministers of the prince, in which they regulated the ceremonial to be observed on each side in the visits to be made and received. Etiquette is in Persia, as every where else, a serious affair; and it is often more difficult to obtain the most trifling concession on this frivolous point, than in the most important negociations.

The day before yesterday, we saw for the first time the Chah Zade Abbas Mirza. We went on horseback in state to his palace; the horses for that purpose having been sent to us by his highness. Ahmed Khan, Beylerbey, or governor of the city, was appointed to receive the legation in

an apartment of the first court. There, he at first caused a mirza to write down our names and qualities, in order that we should be individually presented to the prince: we then entered, conducted by him, into the second court of the seraglia. All the ministers, ranged in rows, were standing in the greatest silence before Abbas Mirza, who alone was seated at the window of a low room. The Chah Zade was dressed in a robe of crimson satin: sparkling bracelets ornamented his arms; the hilt of his sabre, which rested on his knees, shone with the lustre of the precious stones on it, and his head was covered with the common head dress of the kizil-bach,* bound round with a beautiful shawl of an amaranth colour.

By special favour, we were introduced into the very interior of the apartment, after having made, according to the instructions of our introducer, three profound bows. Abbas Mirza received us with much grace: the ambassador took a place beside him, on a gilt arm chair, while we all formed a circle on seats in the French style. The formal address was pronounced in French by the general, and repeated in Persian by M. de Nerciat, second interpreter to the embassy. The conversation then became more familiar: it turned

* Kizil-bach, means red-head or golden-head. The Turks use this word in a deriding manner in speaking of the Persians; and the latter, on their part, assume it as a title of honour.

on the military art, and on the wish of the prince to regulate and instruct his Persian troops in the European manner. On taking leave we were made perform the same ceremony as on our entrance. Abbas Mirza is about twenty-two years of age, of middle size, but well made, and his countenance, though pale and without colour, receives nevertheless great expression from his fine black eyes, in which both kindness and pride seem united.

Abbas Mirza, is only the third son of Feth Ali Chah, the reigning prince. He has, however, been designed from his birth as presumptive heir to the crown, by his father, from the circumstance of his mother's belonging to the royal tribe of the Kadjars. It is to be feared that at the death of the king, his two elder brothers, Muhammed Ali-Khan, and Muhammed Veli Mirza, one of whom commands in Lourestare, and the other in Khorassan, will dispute the throne with him, and that their dissentions may again cause a civil war.

We had scarcely returned to our quarters, when the prince sent to invite the ambassador and his train to a grand feast, for that evening. We returned to the palace, therefore, at eight o'clock, and took our places at a table magnificently decorated, in the same hall where the Chah Zade had received the legation. Abbas Mirza did not appear, but his grand vizir Mirza Buzurk was appointed to do the honours of the banquet. A handsome cashmire shawl, and a piece of silk stuff, embroidered with gold or silver, were given to each of the suite on retiring. The ambassador received on his part a sabre of great value, and other presents still more magnificent.

The general had a second audience of the prince; on this occasion he was only accompanied by M. Verdier, captain of infantry, and three non-commissioned officers of the line, who performed the French exercise in the presence of Abbas Mirza. He received on the same day the visits of the principal personages of the court, and we accompanied him in the evening to the house of the grand vizir, Mirza Buzurk, who had invited us to supper.

This evening Ahmed Khan, Beylerbey of Tauris, has desired to treat us in his turn. Ahmed Khan is an old man of seventy, who has preserved all the gaiety and animation of early youth: he is very partial to the French, and is said to be the first who gave the King of Persia the idea of entering into a correspondence with our court. By a peculiar privilege, and contrary to the ordinary custom of the Persians in advanced years, who dye their beards in order to spare a young prince the necessity of rising to receive an old man, this Beylerbey has preserved his, blanched as it is by age, in its natural colour. We found Ahmed possessed of more information than the rest of his countrymen; he is, however, accused of a fault, which has a deadly influence on his memory and mental faculties. He is one of those

whom the orientals term, theriaki, or eaters of opium*, and the abuse he makes of this dangerous drug, throws him into a kind of delirium which lasts for whole days. This pernicious habit has already caused his disgrace with the Chah Zade, who dismissed him from his employment some months ago; the grand vizir assured us that he had been reinstated in it a few days previous to our arrival, merely on account of his attachment to France.

Four days rest at Tauris have somewhat relieved us from our fatigues, and restored our strength so necessary for proceeding on the remainder of our journey.

* This vice is very common in Turkey and Persia, particularly amongst the old men and dervishes. Early enervated by the abuse of every enjoyment, they hope to revive their blunted senses, by the use of a poison, which soon annihilates all their faculties. I have never seen a more hideous sight, than that of a theriaki; his colour is livid, his eyes dull and hollow, his intoxication resembles a long and painful agony, and his breathing that of a dying man.

LETTER XII.

Road from Tauris to Zenghan.—New Caravan regulated at Tauris.—Seid Abad.—Tikme Tash.—Turkmann.—Ruined Villages and Caravanseries.--Miana, Miana fly.—Bridge on the River Miana.—Kaplan Kouh, or Mountain of Tygers.—The Kizzil Ozzan.—Bridge on that river.—Maiden's Castle.—Akkend.—Herman Khané.—Zenghan, River of the same name.

Zengham, Nov. 21, 1807.

On quitting Tauris, we separated from our mehmandar, Ibrahim Aga, who I have frequently mentioned to you: it was not without sincere regret; for his zeal and attentions to us were never once relaxed, during a journey of more than four hundred leagues: and what is still more rare amongst Turks, a sincere attachment, rather than interested motives, influenced his whole conduct. Ibrahim Aga was not a stranger either to our manners or customs; he had travelled in several European countries, and spoke German tolerably, with which language the ambassador is also acquainted. This knowledge was, on more than one occasion, of great use to the general; he could, when he chose, address himself directly to him, without the aid

of any intermediate person. We have now a new Persian mehmandar,* who is named Nebi Khan; a nobleman of the court of Tauris, whose manners are polite and obliging.

Our Turkish muleteers have returned towards their own country, and our entire caravan is newly remounted; you must not, however, suppose it has gained by the change; we are all badly off, and our horses, according to the almost general custom in Persia, are not even shod. The ambassador and his brother are the only persons amongst us who have at their orders several coursers from the stables of Abbas Mirza; they may, besides, when fatigued, repose in litters covered with red cloth, and carried by mules, which the prince presented to them before our departure.

On the 16th, we travelled seven leagues before we arrived at Seid Abad, a village so wretched, that the inhabitants themselves did not think their houses worthy of receiving us. The greater part of our company passed the night under tents, though the weather was intensely cold: notwithstanding the large fires lighted in the camp, it was impossible for us to sleep.

The next day's march was ten hours, on very

* Mehmandar in Persian signifies one who has charge of guests. In Turkey and Persia this is an officer appointed by the government to accompany ambassadors, and other travellers of distinction, to procure all the necessaries they may require, and to superintend the allotment of proper lodgings for them.

bad roads. The chiefs and principal inhabitants of Tekmé Tash, mounted on very handsome horses, came with musicians, to meet the general. This brilliant parade induced us to expect good quarters; but we found only miserable huts, and straw instead of beds.

We were not more fortunate on the 18th at Turkmann; but the poverty there was so great, that we could not require impossibilities: however, rather than lie in the tents which were pitched for us by the peasants, we preferred their smoky hovels.

All this district is uncultivated and mountainous: at every step there are to be seen ruins of a great number of villages, and of those fine caravanseries, of which Chardin has given a description: they are no longer habitable, and their vast enclosures, abandoned by man, are become the haunts of reptiles and myriads of noxious animals.

Miana, where we concluded our journey of the 19th, is a larger and better built town than the preceding: it contains a square and bazar, while the environs are fertile and well cultivated. We were cautioned to beware of the bite of a small insect, called the Miana fly, which is very venomous, especially during the hot season, and we fortunately escaped it. There are also many serpents and black lizards of extraordinary size, in the volcanic mountains which lie between Turkmann and Miana.

At a short distance from the latter town, we

crossed the river of the same name, by a handsome brick bridge. The plain is soon left, to enter a narrow pass, formed by the Kaplan Kouh, or Mountain of Tygers, a branch of Mount Taurus, which separates Media from the country of the Parthians, now called Irak Adjemi. The Kizzil Ozzan, a large and rapid river in winter, divides this pass in two, and thence runs northward into the Caspian Sea. We passed it by a stone bridge of a great height, which like the former, is falling to ruin. Near its banks was the Maiden's Castle on the summit of a rock. Chardin relates, that, according to the Persian historians, Artaxerxes built it to serve as a prison for a princess of the blood royal; he adds that Abbas the Great destroyed it, because it served as a refuge for a gang of robbers, who had made themselves masters of the mountain. After ten hours march, we arrived at Akkend, a town of considerable extent, surrounded with walls, and situated on an elevated hill, whence runs a rivulet, that falls in cascades. The Kalenter of this place, Rehim Khan, received us at his house, and performed the duties of hospitality with a very good grace.

Yesterday we travelled nine leagues, to reach Herman Khané, a handsome fortified village, belonging to the Khan of Zenghan. The inhabitants made some difficulties before they would receive us into their houses: this led to a liberal distribution of the bastinado, inflicted by order

of our mehmandar. If he had consulted us, we should certainly have opposed this act of violence; but it was no longer in our power to preserve the people from it, for Nebi Khan was beforehand with us. Thus it is that the most valuable rights of mankind are respected in countries subjected to despotism! If men make laws, these may also be said to make men, while the character of the latter always savours of their good or evil tendency. The inhabitants of this village, accustomed to the tyranny of the great Persian lords, who, when travelling, take possession of their dwellings by main force, hesitated for some time to receive us, because they were afraid of finding new oppressors. Such are the results of arbitrary acts, when they remain unpunished; they raise the people against the magistracy, and are a public outrage both to the nation and government!

We arrived here at four o'clock to-day, and are accommodated in the house of Terradj Oula Khan, nasaktchi bachi, or commander of the king's guards. This general is now at court, where his duties retain him during the greater part of the year; but we have met the most friendly reception from his son, who commands in his father's absence. In the evening he gave the legation a sumptuous feast, to which all the principal personages of the town were also invited.

Zenghan is the capital of Hamzé, a province which forms part of Irak Adjemi: it contains about ten thousand inhabitants, some of whom are Armenians.

LETTER XIII.

Road from Zenghan to Kasbinn. — Sultanié.— Sankala. — Ebher.— Description of Kasbinn. — Illuminations with coloured Paper Lanterns, Fire-works and Puppet Show at the House of Mehrab Khan, Governor of that City. — The King of Persia's Predilection for Astrology.

Kasbinn, Nov. 29, 1807.

At three leagues from Zenghan are found the ruins of Sultanié: a miserable village has succeeded to that ancient city. We remained there on the 23d. Sultanié was the capital of Persia, and the residence of several of its kings, until the reign of Chah Abbas I., called the Great, who changed the seat of his empire to Ispahan. It is impossible to take a single step in it without treading on the ruins of fine monuments, which remind the stranger of its past splendour. The most remarkable are the magnificent remains of three mosques built of brick, and surmounted with their cupolas and minarets. The interiors, once encrusted with jasper and alabaster, were ornamented with rich arabesques, and verses from the Koran, many of which still remain. We visited the parts of these grand edifices which time has spared, and that a more active government might even yet save from total ruin.

When the sovereigns held their court at Sultanié, this city, if the Persians may be credited, was not less than ten leagues in circumference, and it was reputed to be one of the largest and most populous in Asia:* at present it is nothing more than a wretched village of about forty houses, half excavated in the earth, the inhabitants of which are as poor as their ancestors were opulent. This place, however, has not entirely lost the honour of being a royal residence. There is, on a neighbouring eminence, a small palace, to which the present king goes every year to pass a part of the summer, with some of his ladies. The court leaves Teheran early in June, when the heat begins to become insupportable in that capital, and encamps in the plain of Sultanié, near a stream whose banks are shaded by some trees, the only ones which are seen in all the district. Feth Ali Chah does not return to the city until the month of September: his fourth son, Hassan Ali Mirza, fulfils a part of the functions of sovereignty in his absence.

The princes of the royal family, and the khans who govern the different provinces of the kingdom, leave their residences at the same time to

* Sultanié was still a city surrounded with walls, in the time of Chardin. That traveller asserts that Ismael Khouda Bendê, father of Chah Abbas I. died there, and that he is buried near the largest of the mosques I have mentioned.

pass the summer under tents in the midst of the fields. This custom, peculiar to the Asiatics, originally a wandering people, depicts better than any account we have, the primitive manners of those fierce Tartars, who changed their residence according as they advanced in their conquests.

It is in the camps of the Persians that all the Asiatic luxury is displayed; their tents, more splendid and better ornamented than the finest houses of the towns, may be compared, for magnificence, with all that historians have related of the richness and pomp which attended their renowned ancestors in war.

Though the plain of Sultanié be naked and totally destitute of shade, the surrounding mountains render its climate extremely cool; and it is asserted that after the burning heat of the day in August, it is necessary during the night to close all the tents, and put on several blankets, to provide against the intense cold. The government of the kingdom is not interrupted by the king's residence in the camps; where the vizirs act judicially, and public affairs are conducted as in the city. The amusements of the monarch consist of frequent hunting parties in the plain and mountains, and various military exercises which he causes to be performed by his troops, after the great heat of the day has subsided.

From Sultanié we proceeded to Ebher, a small town situated ten leagues further on, in a more

fertile and better cultivated country. Ebher is built on the banks of a small river of the same name, and contains five or six thousand inhabitants. We also passed through Sankala, a large fortified village, where the king generally halts for two days, before he arrives at Sultanié: this part of the plain is very populous, and ornamented with handsome villages.

On the 25th, there was a fall of snow when we mounted our horses. In spite of the very bad weather and severe cold, the worthy peasants came to meet us on our way, to offer us their kettles filled with meat and rice, which we declined with many acknowledgments for such a striking proof of hospitality. After eleven hours march, we arrived half frozen, at Sia Dehen, where we were lodged with an old man, whose sincere and disinterested attention soon made us forget our fatigues. Sia Dehen is a village surrounded by walls, as are almost all those in Persia; and the houses, instead of being terraced, are covered in with domes.

We have been in Kasbinn since the 26th, and are therefore near the termination of our travels, having only thirty-six leagues to go, in order to reach Teheran.

The plain of Kasbinn is rich in vineyards and orchards: the vine here does not need props, as in Europe; its own strength supports it; the stem is as thick as the trunk of a young tree, and grows more than five feet high. The grape is excellent,

but the wine is of a very indifferent quality; and the Persians, for what reason I know not, have the custom of leaving the stone, which gives it a disagreeably harsh and bitter flavour.

At a league from Kasbinn, we met Mehrab Khan, the governor. He was waiting for the ambassador, with a numerous troop of horsemen and musicians. Wrestlers, having their bodies covered with grease, and whose whole clothing consisted of a pair of light drawers, preceded us wielding large maces; but their ridiculous contortions did not give us a high idea either of their talents or agility. We entered the city in a confused manner, in the midst of an immense crowd of people, quite stupified with the din of the music; and alighted at the khan's house, which had been previously prepared for our reception.

Kasbinn, founded in the third century by Chapour II., is also called by the Persians, Djemal Abad, or the beautiful city. It is a large plain, at the foot of Mount Elwend, a branch of the Taurus, which separates Irak Adjemi from the districts of Hyrcania. Chardin, who should always be quoted when Persia is mentioned, calculates that there were in this city, twelve thousand houses and one hundred thousand inhabitants. That traveller also informs us, that the walls, by which it was formerly defended, were in ruins when he wrote the above: they have, however, been rebuilt since that period, for it is now fortified with brick ramparts and towers; but its population is considerably diminished, and does not exceed fifty thousand souls. Kasbinn had also, for some time, the honour of being the residence of the kings of Persia, and there is still to be seen an ancient palace which was once inhabited by several of those monarchs. Its commerce is very flourishing, and nothing can be more magnificent than its new bazars, where there is a profusion of the richest commodities, and the most exquisite fruits. It owed a part of its former celebrity to its manufactories of sabres, the temper of which surpassed those of all the rest of Persia. Ispahan has subsequently usurped this superiority; and the Indian steel, which is employed at present in the manufactures of the latter city, is more esteemed by the Persians, and merits this preference. In fact, it is impossible to see more beautiful arms—they surpass even those of Damascus in the excellence of the material, and the delicacy of the workmanship. A sabre of Ispahan, wielded by an able hand, easily cuts through a bar of iron of half an inch diameter, and even a bale of cotton of middling size. Our military companions are very fond of these fine blades, and intend to take some of them to France.

The water used at Kasbinn is limpid, and very agreeable to the taste: it is an advantage that this city possesses over nearly all the places in Persia which we have yet seen. As to its public edifices, long vaulted galleries solidly built of brick, which serve for bazars, and a few mosques, are the obstacles that struck us as most remarkable.

The latter have cupolas externally covered with a coarse earthenware of a green colour, which at a certain distance, produces a very brilliant effect.

The house of the khan, with whom we are lodged, consists of several courts surrounded by apartments which have only a ground floor. The rooms are painted in fresco, and the windows are composed of small panes of coloured glass. We did not expect to remain here more than one day; but the King of Persia, who has great faith in astrology, caused it to be notified to the general, that the 4th of December would be a fortunate day for the embassy, and that he had appointed it for our entry into his capital! We have been desirous to avoid displeasing a monarch who is connected with the stars; and placed as we shall henceforth be under their influence, our progress will of course be regulated by the decrees of fate!

In the mean while, the khan of Kasbinn neglects no means of making our residence in this city agreeable, and according to custom, he does not spare good cheer. The day before yesterday we had illuminations of coloured paper lanterns and fireworks; to-day a puppet-show has terminated the festivities of his palace.

My next letter will be dated from the present capital of Persia. The ambassador not having thought it offensive to the stars, to send forward an officer to prepare the necessary lodgings for the legation.

LETTER XIV.

Road from Kasbinn to Teheran.—Hassan Abad.—Kichla, a Pleasure House of the King of Persia.—Kerbous Abad.—Ali Chah Abbas.—Entry of the Embassy into Teheran.—Description of that City, its Position.—Mount Elvend.—The Peek of Demavend.—Interior Arrangement of a Persian House.—Audience of the King.—Portrait of Feth Ali Chah.

Teheran, Dec. 15, 1807.

We performed the journey from Kasbinn to Teheran in five days, and have been in the last-named place since the 4th. As I informed you in my preceding letter, our march has been regulated by the wishes of the king. This capital does not in the least correspond with the idea we had formed of the residence of an Asiatic monarch. Before I inform you of what we have as yet seen here, permit me to give you, for the last time, the usual details of our march, from the 30th ultimo, to the 9th instant. On the first day we slept at Hassan Abad, above three hours march from Kasbinn. The inhabitants, according to the custom of the Persian peasants, received us in their best style, congratulating us on the happiness we should soon enjoy, in contemplat-

ing their monarch and all his court. In this district the corrupt Turkish of Azerbaidjan is no longer heard; the Persian language being in general use amongst the people.

On the 1st we had, during the whole day, tolerably good roads, a remarkable circumstance in Persia. In the afternoon we were invited to halt and partake of a banquet at Kichla, a pleasure house of the king's, situated near a large village better fortified than any of those we had previously seen.

The castle of Kichla is not large, and contains only three or four apartments: built on an eminence, it commands several terraces which rise amphitheatrically one above another; also some fine gardens watered by numerous canals for irrigation. We concluded the day's journey at Kerbous Abad, or village of water melons, about nine leagues from Hassan Abad.* The kalenter received us in his house: the duties of this magistrate correspond nearly with those of a mayor.

From Kerbous Abad to Kemal Abad, where we arrived on the following day, the distance is ten leagues. The latter village affords none of the conveniences that are required by travellers: though its environs appear rather fertile, there is no water to be had in it, excepting what is brackish and muddy.

* The word Abad is synonymous with the Keui of the Turks; and signifies habitation or village.

On the 3d, we had a fall of snow, and very bad roads for proceeding to Ali Chah Abbas: our march lasted seven hours. The last-named place is a large and fortified town; fine gardens, vineyards, and numerous plantations, make it one of the most beautiful spots in the neighbourhood of the capital. Yet the houses are destitute of the most necessary objects; there are neither doors nor windows to be seen in them. We stopped there the remainder of the day and following night; and to guard us from the cold, it was necessary to close all the apertures with carpets.

On the 4th, we rose at day-break: the general was dressed in full uniform, and each of his suite wore the distinctive costume of his station. We departed in good order from Ali Chah Abbas: the delightful weather added to the brilliant effect of our entry, for an hour before we saw the much desired city; and when not more than a short league from Teheran, the cavalcade halted at an insulated mosque in the midst of the open country. Here the Nasakechi-bachi, Ferradj Oula Khan, received the ambassador under a beautiful tent, pitched by order of the king, and complimented him in the name of his majesty. We resumed our march after having partaken of the feast, and the embassy entered the capital at four in the afternoon, escorted by fifteen hundred cavalry and as many infantry. Nearly all the population had gone out of the city to enjoy a spectacle so new to them.

We followed Oula Khan to the residence of the grand vizir, Mirza Muhammed Chefi, whose palace was prepared for receiving the ambassador and part of his train. The officers were lodged in a separate house: I reside with M. Jouannin; and two others of my colleagues, at that of Mirza Aboulkassem, son of Mirza Buzurk, grand vizir of the Chah Zade, Abbas Mirza.

On the same evening the ambassador had his first conference with Mirza Muhammed Chefi. This minister is a man of advanced age, who has long possessed the favour and confidence of the king: the mildness of his disposition, and his good offices towards us, have already gained him our gratitude and attachment.

I shall now give you an idea of our new residence, and then proceed to other details.

Teheran, the present capital of Irak Adjemi and all Persia, is situated at the end of a large plain, closed in by two ranges of mountains, which serve as boundaries to Mazenderan. It is built close to Mount Elvend, which separates it from Guilan, and seems to raise an impenetrable barrier between it and the north winds. A peak always covered with snow, which is called the Demavend, crowns the eastern mountains, about ten leagues from the city. The plain runs narrowing to the northward: it is fertile in some parts, but barren and sandy in many others.

Teheran is thirty leagues south of the Caspian Sea, one hundred north from Ispahan, six hundred south-east of Constantinople, and nearly twelve hundred from Paris. Thirty years ago, it was but little known, and, with the exception of Pietro della Valle, quoted by Olivier, no traveller of former ages has mentioned it. It only begun to be a royal residence under the eunuch Aga Muhammed Khan, uncle of the reigning prince: he embellished, fortified, and built a vast palace here, which forms a second city in the midst of the capital itself. Since that period, Teheran has continually increased, and now contains from forty-five to fifty thousand inhabitants. This is certainly but a weak population for the capital of a great empire. Ispahan, in the most flourishing epochs of the Sophis, contained six hundred thousand; but Persia was then more happy and tranquil, and sanguinary revolutions had not as yet depopulated it.

By transporting the seat of royalty to Teheran, Aga Muhammed Khan had an approximation to Mazenderan, his native country, in view; from having had a strong party, he continually sent treasure there, and took every measure necessary for securing a retreat, in the event of fortune ceasing to be favourable. His nephew, Feth Ali Chah, follows his example; but he has less to fear, and his government, more mild and equitable than that of his predecessor, seems to ensure him a throne which he has so justly merited by his estimable qualities.

Teheran is defended by a single enclosure of

earthen ramparts, and each of its gates is covered by a small round tower, furnished with some artillery. Those gates, six in number, are guarded by a detachment of fusileers and custom-house officers. The city does not contain any public or private edifice worthy of fixing the attention: its streets, without pavement, resemble those of a village more than a capital. No window opens on the public road, and the stranger at first deceived by the aspect of its high towers, might long seek for the city in its own bosom, if his sight had not been insensibly habituated to a similar spectacle in the other provinces of Persia. It frequently happens that considerable spaces of ground are left waste from the houses having been overthrown by earthquakes; others are occupied by baths, public squares, mosques and cemeteries; some by gardens and even cultivated fields: from all this it is evident that the population of a city in Persia, never corresponds with the idea which you naturally formed of it, when its extent had been taken into consideration.

All the splendor of the houses at Teheran is reserved for their interior; whoever has seen one, may be supposed acquainted with all; their construction is every where on the same plan, and the king's palace is arranged like the most simple dwelling of his meanest subject: the only difference consists in the greater or lesser extent and decorations of the apartments, and the number of courts and gardens attached to them.

The following particulars will give you some idea of a Persian house. The principal gate is arched, and leads at first into a spacious court, encompassed by a pavement of bricks, laid flat; the two spaces that approach nearest to the center form a garden planted with rose, jasmin, and plane trees. An oblong bason, with some small water-spouts, divides the court into two equal parts. The principal edifice is at the end of this court; it usually consists of three rooms on the ground floor, and two chambers on the first story. The apartment in the middle, which is the largest, is called divan khané, and has no windows; it is closed only by a great curtain, that is raised or lowered at will, by the aid of cords and pullies: amongst persons of rank, this room is the hall of audience and saloon for company.

The two lateral chambers are smaller, but sometimes richly ornamented. The windows are of joiner's work, very delicately executed, and the panes of glass, which are never more than four inches square, are of various colours, like those in our old churches. In the houses where there is not much wealth, its place is supplied by white paper or linen slightly varnished, which is stuck on the window sashes. The other three sides of the court present only a plain wall, behind which are built some small offices for the servants.

The harem, or apartment of the women, is in the second or third court, exactly similar to the

first. In general their number, proportioned to that of the main building, varies according to the wealth of the proprietor, but the houses have scarcely ever more than a ground floor, and another story is never seen except in the palaces of the king and the chief nobility.

The interior of a Persian apartment contains no other furniture than one of those beautiful carpets, so much esteemed in Europe, and three felts of extremely fine texture, of which the two narrowest run the length of the room: the widest is placed at the end near the windows, and is called mesned, or the place of honour. The Persians have no other seats.

In the houses of the higher nobility, the cornices are decorated with flowers and birds painted in fresco, with extreme delicacy: you sometimes see compartments of seven inches in depth, which serve to receive portraits or other pictures. The chambers of the servants and those of private persons in poor circumstances, are white-washed, or simply plastered with a mixture of mud and chopped straw.

Chimnies are rare in the Persian houses, and they often appear merely for ornament; their form is that of a canopy. Here the people generally warm themselves as in Turkey, only with burning charcoal, in a mangal or chafing dish of copper, iron, or even of earthenware. All the buildings are roofed as terraces, covered with

beaten earth, and in several towns they have small cupolas.

In the whole city of Teheran, there is but one square which merits that name. This is the Meidan, which is in front of the principal entrance of the king's palace; its form is that of a parallelogram, as long and broad as the Carrousel at Paris. The ramparts and ditches of the royal palace occupy one entire side of it; the three others are surrounded with low mud walls, having a white moulding. Various apartments have been attached to it, for the accommodation of the king's household. Some small trees and green turf are the only ornaments of this square. There is a long pole erected in the centre, which serves for the punishment of criminals.

A small rivulet crosses the square in its whole length, and the public barbers have established themselves on its borders. Here it is that they shave the heads of passengers, bleed, and perform operations; for they are the only surgeons in this country.

The Meidan is entered by two gates, one of which is near the bazars. We have examined the latter, which are very extensive, but not so handsome as those of Kasbinn, where it would be far preferable to reside, in every respect.

Near the same place, there is a mosque building, which it is asserted will be magnificent. Nothing, in my opinion, appears yet to justify this eulogy: the cupola, already finished, is deficient in that

lightness so justly admired, in the ancient Persian monuments, and buildings of the same class amongst the Turks. The mosques that are built here, have no longer any minarets : it is said that the Persians object to them from a refinement in jealousy, lest the muezzins, who announce the hour of prayer from the tops of these elegant shafts, should perceive their women in the interior of the harems. It was necessary that jealousy itself should be sanctified by religion, to be able to obtain such a victory over it. The muezzins, who are themselves husbands, now call the faithful to the mosques, from the platforms on the tops of the gates.

The entrance of the Persian temples is not interdicted to strangers, as in Turkey. I shall have occasion to mention them to you hereafter, and to dwell on the difference of belief between these two nations—also on the tolerant principles of the Persians contrasted with the fanaticism of the Turks.

Four days after our arrival, we accompanied the ambassador to the king's audience. Feth Ali Chah had previously sent us the khalaats, or dresses of honour, which he bestows on his guests on such occasions. These presents consisted, for the general, in a pelisse of gold cloth, of the same shape as those of the chah zades, in arms richly ornamented, cashmere shawls, &c. and for each of his suite, pelisses similar to those of the court nobles, girdles of gold cloth, and shawls.

The ceremonial observed in our reception by the king, was nearly the same as at Tauris, when we were presented to Abbas Mirza. The introducer of ambassadors made us wait half an hour in an apartment, where we were served with tea and coffee. The general was then introduced alone into the hall of the throne, and we were ranged in the garden with the vizirs, facing Feth Ali Chah, to whom each was indicated by his name and profession. When it came to the turn of our chaplains, his majesty desired that they should be informed he had recommended his mollahs to pray for the prosperity of France, and that he hoped they would, on their part, offer up supplications to the Almighty for the glory and welfare of his reign.

The throne is of white marble, and supported by several small columns, placed on the ground floor, in a large hall ornamented with paintings and mirrors ; it is seen from the furthest extremity of the garden, where, in conformity to the Persian etiquette, the viziers, and even the chah zades, were ranged each according to his age or dignity. We are led to hope that at the festival of Bairam, we shall see the king of Persia somewhat nearer. I shall then give you more ample details of the ceremonials of this court, and on the magnificence displayed at it, especially before strangers.

Feth Ali Chah is about forty-two : his countenance is handsome and majestic, and his large black eyes, surmounted with thick eyebrows, are

far from giving his physiognomy that harsh and ferocious expression which one would expect to find in an Asiatic monarch. He wears a long beard which reaches to his girdle: this is a remarkable beauty amongst the Persians, and it has often inspired the muse of her poets. The king protects and encourages, by his liberalities, learned men, but principally poets; and it is said he himself occasionally indulges in poetical compositions. I shall again, more than once, return to a sovereign, who merits in every respect the applause and attention of foreigners. It is to the moderation and justice of his government that Persia owes the happiness and tranquillity which, after long convulsions, she has enjoyed these many years. I conceive, therefore, that all which relates to such a prince must interest you.

LETTER XV.

Historical Summary of the various Dynasties which have reigned in Persia, from the Year 2400, before the Christian Era, to the present Time. Dynasties of the *Pichdadians, Kaianites,* and *Achganians.*

Teheran, Dec. 24, 1807.

Previous to informing you of the actual state of Persia, I am about to ascend to the most remote periods. In passing rapidly through the several epochas of the Persian monarchy, I shall endeavour to raise the veil of fictions, and avoid, as much as possible, the fables of the oriental historians: and from the plan I have adopted, I hope to succeed in discovering the truth.

The first dynasty of the Persian kings, was that of the Pichdadians, called in the Holy Scriptures, the Elamites. Its origin is lost in the obscurity of time; but some authors have traced it in the year 2400 before the Christian era. It is asserted that the first monarchs of Persia derived the appellation of Pichdadians, from Hoshing, the third king of this dynasty, a prince celebrated for his love of justice, to whom his subjects gave the surname of Pichdad, which signifies *the just.* If true, his history deserves to be better known: such a title is the most glo-

rious a sovereign can aspire to; it never causes tears to flow: while that of *great*, generally granted to conquerors, has been almost invariably destructive to the human race. The kings, who have received it from the transient enthusiasm of nations, or rather from the flattery of their courtiers, have unfortunately thought themselves obliged to merit it by exploits little calculated to secure the happiness of nations.

Hoshing, however, waged war against the people called Ichtiophagi or Fish-eaters, who inhabited the coasts of the Persian Gulf: he was successful; and his title should incline us to believe he conducted it with justice. The oriental historians attribute to him the honour of having been the first who tamed a horse. Diemchid, who reigned later, is a king whose memory is still held in veneration by the modern Persians; and Feth Ali Chah himself, amongst his titles, takes that of successor of Diemchid. He instituted the Newrous, a festival, of which I shall hereafter give you a description. The following is an anecdote on this subject, related by the Persian historians.

Diemchid, travelling through his provinces, halted in one of the cities of Azerbaidjan, and caused his throne to be placed so that it might be seen by the whole population. Every one, struck with the majesty of his person, and the splendor of the jewels that covered his head, cried out, newrous! newrous! which meant, this is a new

day for us. The king seized this occasion to institute a festival, when the nobility were to make presents to the sovereign, and in their turn, receive favours and dignities from him: prisoners also were to be set at liberty.

This origin appears to favour rather too much of the romantic, and I am not disposed to adopt it. I should rather imagine the Persians, who then considered the Sun, Mithras, as the emblem of the divinity, or, indeed, as the divinity itself, instituted this ceremony in acknowledgment of the new benefits which that luminary disseminated over their lands every spring. The most ancient, as well as modern nations, have always regarded the productions of the earth, as the richest gifts of heaven: and it seems quite natural that the Persians, since they saw the Creator himself in the most glorious work of his hand, should offer up a solemn homage to it at that period of the year, when its influence is so strikingly manifested. This festival, though no longer consonant to the religion now existing, is still renewed every year, at the vernal equinox, and continues for a certain number of days.

But to return to Diemchid. This prince presents to our view a singular instance of human weakness. He had for a long time contributed to the happiness of Persia; nothing could resist his power, and he might have terminated such a fortunate reign in peace, when he suddenly fancied himself immortal, and that he ought to receive the same

adorations as the Divinity. This strange presumption, which was afterwards renewed by some of the Roman Emperors, was the cause of his ruin. One of his relations, named Piurach, who governed Sigistan, having raised the nation against him, concluded by seizing on the crown. Nothing was more capable of undeceiving his subjects on the pretended divinity of their sovereign. A god dethroned by a mere mortal! What a lesson for both!

Piurach, who had begun by a bold act, wished to awe the nation by his cruelty: but it hurled him from a throne of which he was unworthy: a blacksmith, named Kaob, deprived him of the crown, and refusing it himself, delivered it to Feridoun, the son of Diemchid. Piurach, who had been surnamed Dehbahkt (the man of ten bad qualities), was imprisoned by his orders in a deep dungeon. It is asserted that this monster, in order to cure himself of two ulcers, applied the brains of a man newly killed to them.*

* It was perhaps Piurach whom the poet Saadi had in view in the following history—it is in the tenth book of his Gulistan.

A king of antiquity had long suffered a painful disease. The whole faculty of Greek physicians determined that the liver of a man just killed, was the only remedy which could relieve his disorder. After many researches, there was at length found, in a village, a young child whose appearance bespoke the state of health required by the physicians. The parents were called, and their consent being gained by dint of money, the cadi declared by a fetva, that the blood of a subject was necessary for the cure of the prince.

In gratitude for the obligations he owed to Kaob, Feridoun gave the government of Azerbaidjan to the brave and disinterested blacksmith: he further desired that his leathern apron should for ever afterwards be the royal standard of Persia. This great prince, whose memory is still honoured amongst the modern Persians, possessed all the virtues which form good kings. Having lived to an advanced age, he resigned the cares of sovereignty to his grandson, Manoudjeher, to whom he addressed these remarkable words: *My son, consider all the days of your reign as so*

All was ready for the sacrifice, when the child raised his head, looking towards Heaven, and smiled. "Why dost thou smile at such a moment?" the king asked him, with surprise. "It is in the bosom of his father and mother," he replied, "that a child seeks caresses; it is before the cadi that his cause is pleaded, and it is from the king that justice is demanded, *when refused elsewhere*. Now that my parents have sold my blood for sordid gain, that the cadi has given a fetva for my destruction, and that my sovereign has deemed my death indispensable for his health, I have no other refuge than the beneficence of the Supreme Being. To whom can I complain of thy severity? Is it from thyself that I should demand justice for thine own actions?" This discourse agitated the king, and tears were seen to flow from his eyes. "My death is preferable to that of this innocent young creature," he cried,—he then embraced him, made the boy sit beside him,—he was next liberated, and loaded with favours. It is said, that in the same week, Heaven restored the monarch's health. I recollect, in regard to this, two verses which a Kornac repeated on the banks of the Nile. *Knowest thou to what may be compared, the fate of the ant which thou crushest beneath thy steps? To that of a man destroyed by the feet of an elephant!*

many leaves of a book; take care how you write upon any page, except what you wish to have read by posterity.

Manoudjeher, the worthy successor of his grand-father, had a long and glorious reign. His grand vizir, Souhan Zal Zer, (with golden hair) was father of the famous Rustem, who may be termed the Hercules of the orientals. Zal Zer was also the prime minister of Nodar, son and heir of Manoundjeher: he lost his life in a war against the Turks, who invaded the kingdom. Nodar himself fell into the power of his enemies; and Afrasiab, son to the king of Turkestan, caused himself to be acknowledged sovereign of Persia.

Having possessed himself of the empire solely by the right of conquest, Afrasiab thought he might abuse his victory with impunity, by making the nation groan under a weight of despotism and cruelty; but a son of Zal Zer soon delivered Persia from a foreign yoke, and refusing for himself the crown which his talents merited, he resigned it to Zab, who was descended from the Pichdadian kings.

The latter, instructed in the school of misfortune, and matured by long experience, was no longer young when he mounted the throne. He healed the wounds of the state, which had long been afflicted with calamities, reconciled all the conflicting interests, and became celebrated for his beneficence. Historians only accuse him of having been too much addicted to the pleasures of

the table. His death is said to have plunged Persia into new disasters. Kichtab, his son, or according to others, his nephew, whom he had previously associated with himself on the throne, survived him but a short time, and died in arms whilst defending the state against the Turks, who again invaded the country. Thus terminated the dynasty of the Pichdadians, which had given laws to Persia during a period of nearly fifteen hundred years.

I have passed the reigns of several kings, such as those of Kersoman, to whom the foundation of this monarchy is attributed; of his son Siamek, of Tahmurat, surnamed Diwbend, (chainer of the devil), because they belong more to fiction than history; and I should not have risked so much in speaking of the others, had I not previously warned you that the thick gloom which covers those very remote times, is still more augmented by the variety of opinions, and the fables of romance writers.

The dynasty of the Kaianites or Median kings, was founded by Keikobad, who some writers state to have been the son of Zab, and others the nephew of Nodar. It was about the year 900, before the Christian era, that this prince ascended the throne. Like Zab, he also owed his crown to Zal Zer, who refused it a second time. In gratitude to this great minister, who, in concert with his son Rustem, had delivered Persia from the iron sceptre of Afrasiab, he maintained the former in his emi-

nent post, and confided the chief command of his armies to the other. The mildness of Kaikobad's government soon caused all previous misfortunes to be forgotten in Persia; and that prince occupied himself entirely in protecting and encouraging the arts of peace. To him are attributed the first high roads that had been made in the kingdom, and their division into fersenks.

Kaikaus, son or grandson of Kaikobad, and who succeeded him, was engaged in new wars on the death of that prince. A rebel had availed himself of the circumstance to seize on Mazenderan: he was reduced, however, and forced to submission. But the king was less fortunate in another expedition into Touran, against Afrasiab, by whom he was vanquished and taken prisoner. Being soon delivered by Rustem, he was indebted to that hero for the conquest of Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor, and thought he could not better testify his gratitude to him than by giving him his own sister Djehennaz, in marriage, and proclaiming him his viceroy, with the title of Pehliwani Djihan, the supporter of the world.

Kaikaus had taken possession of Yemen, when fortune suddenly ceasing to be favourable, caused him to fall into the power of Zubzogar, king of that district, whose daughter he had formerly married. Rustem again came to liberate him. Peace was signed on each side, and a strict alliance united for ever after, the father and son-in-law.

Afrasiab*, always ready to take advantage of the troubles which distracted Persia, to aggrandize himself at the expense of that kingdom, attacked the city of Balk; when Rustem, joined with Siavek, son by a former marriage of Kaikous, arrested his progress in that expedition, and succeeded in negociating an advantageous treaty with him. However, the queen Saudabah, to revenge herself of the young Siavek, who she could not pardon for having disdained her charms, succeeded in persuading the king that his son had betrayed his confidence, and made a dishonourable treaty for the empire; accordingly that weak monarch sent Thuus, the brother of Siavek, with an order to the latter to resign the command of the troops. The generous Rustem was included in this disgrace, and the same order required him to retire, on account of his advanced age, into his government of Sigistan.

The above history has a great resemblance to that of the wife and son of Theseus, except that the Persian Hypolitus was less docile to his father, as you will perceive by the sequel.

Rustem submitted without a murmur to the

* Many authors observe, with reason, that there must have been several of the name of Afrasiab. Either the oriental historians continue to give this name to several princes of Turkestan, his successors, or their well known taste for exaggeration, and the marvellous, induces them to make him live during a long series of ages. It is impossible otherwise to explain this repetition, which must add still more to the distrust we already entertain of their accuracy.

king's ingratitude; but Siavek, far from obeying the harsh mandate, remained for some time with the army, and concluded by passing into the camp of Afrasiab, with one of the principal Turkish officers, named Piran Vischeh, whom he held as a hostage. The candour and simplicity of this young prince, so pleased the king of Turkestan, that he persuaded him to remain at his court, and gave him his daughter Franghiz in marriage. The favour which Siavek enjoyed, soon excited the envy of Garsiavech, the brother of Afrasiab, against a stranger whose influence and ambition he feared. He was therefore assassinated by the orders of that traitor, and his wife would have shared the same fate, if Piran Vischez had not arrested the hands of the murderers. Siavek, who had long expected the event, recommended Franghiz, then pregnant, to send his child into Persia, should it happen to be a boy.

This being actually the case, he was named Kai Khousrew, and eventually succeeded to his paternal grandfather; but he did not return to Persia, until long after the death of his father: concealed in Turkestan by his mother, who endeavoured to save him from the implacable hatred of Garsiavech, he was at length discovered by the address of a young Persian sent in search of him by Kaikous. Meanwhile Rustem, to revenge the death of his nephew, carried fire and sword into Turkestan. The miseries of war would have long continued, were it not that the

guilty prince lost his life in the first battle. Kai Khousrew, though possessing the peculiar affection of Kaikaus, found many enemies and envious persons in his grandfather's court. The most dangerous of all was Thuus, the king's own son, who, in that capacity, considered himself as having a greater right to the crown. In order to end their dissensions, Kaikaus declared that it should belong to him of the two who rendered himself most worthy of it by his courage and talents in war; and to decide their claims, he sent them in different directions, each to attack a strong fortress, where a rebel had taken refuge; declaring, that the first who vanquished the traitor, should receive the crown. Khousrew carried the place, and the king kept his word. Worn out by the double weight of years and royalty, he abdicated in favour of his grandson.

Following the example of his progenitors, Kai Khousrew also made war on the people of Turkestan, and defeated them on several occasions: he is represented as just, and having merited the love of his subjects. Some writers assert, that the Persian sage, Locman, so celebrated for his ingenious fables, flourished under this monarch, while others say he did not appear till a future reign. Khousrew nominated his nearest relative, Lohorasp, to succeed him, and finished his days in retirement and tranquillity.

Severe on the nobles, who were never disposed to recognise the sovereign authority; just and

generous to the people,—such was Lohorasp. This prince removed the seat of empire to Balk, in Khorassan, made war on Syria, and captured Jerusalem.

His eldest son, Gustap, impatient to reign, revolted against him. After having failed in the attempt, he retired amongst a neighbouring people, whose sovereign gave him his daughter in marriage; and the traiterous Gustap soon persuaded his benefactor to declare war against Persia. The conduct of Lohorasp, on this occasion, deserves to be cited for its moderation. Sacrificing his personal resentment against an unnatural son, to the peace of his subjects, he sent to offer the crown to Gustap, who accepted it, intreating his father to remain near him, to aid him with his advice. Lohorasp consented to this for some time, and afterwards, following the example of his progenitors, went to terminate his days far from tumult and greatness.

As bad a parent as he had been an undutiful son, and fearing the fate which he had made Lohorasp experience, Gustap kept his son Isfendiar for a long time in prison. The rebellion of Rustem, who had refused to submit to the new dogmas introduced by Zoroaster, determined him at length to liberate that young prince, who perished in battle, defending his father's crown; and Gustap, fatigued with the duties of royalty, delivered the reins of government to his grandson, Ardeschir.

The latter declared himself protector of the new religion, which subsequently became that of the Persian kings and nation, until the conquest of this empire by the caliphs.—The reign of Ardeschir was a long series of great and generous actions. He restrained the extortions of the provincial governors; and during his whole life, was only occupied in promoting the happiness of his people. This fine maxim of his has been preserved: "A king should never listen to flattery, nor be deaf to the calls of justice!" His age was also that of the sciences and fine arts in Persia. Historians place the death of the famous Rustem at the same period.*

Khomani, the wife of Ardeschir, was pregnant at the death of her husband. It is said, she took possession of the government to preserve it for the son, of whom she hoped to be delivered. A great deal is related of her clemency, justice, and magnificence. She embellished the city of Esthekar, better known by the name of Persepolis, which was afterwards burnt by Alexander. At the end of thirty-two years, she resigned the crown to her son Dara I. or Darius, whose history has some resemblance to that of Œdipus.

* The Oriental historians also give a long life to Rustem. This is a general custom with respect to all their celebrated personages. It is probable there have been several conquerors of the above name, and that they have made out of them one sole hero, in order to make him appear more extraordinary; but I again repeat, that I merely quote the principal epochas of Persian history according to its own writers.

The astrologers had predicted that this prince would some day draw down the greatest misfortunes on the empire, if permitted to live. Khomani not being able to determine on sacrificing Darius herself, had caused him to be exposed on a river: he was there rescued by a dyer, and afterwards acknowledged by his mother. The prediction of the astrologers was falsified by the happiness which the people enjoyed under his reign. He carried on war against Fitikous (Philip) King of Macedon, whose daughter he married, and died after a short reign. Dara II. accomplished the prediction which had been made for his predecessor. Historians accused him of having been addicted to every vice, a singular circumstance as you will have seen amongst the princes whom I have mentioned. He dishonoured the close of the Kaianite dynasty, and rendered it odious to the nation. Iskender, or Alexander, availed himself of the circumstance to carry war into Persia; and Dara perished by the hands of his own subjects, after having been defeated. It is related, that, at the moment of his death, he induced Iskender to accept his daughter Rouscheng in marriage, and charged him to revenge his death.

Alexander, whom the orientals elevate above all the heroes of antiquity, is placed by them in the number of the kings of Persia. I shall avoid recounting all the fables which the Persians detail of his exploits. There are, however, in their

histories some real facts, and others which approach the truth. They assert, that he effected the conquest of Asia, three hundred and thirty-one years before Christ; and that he died at Babylon, in the thirty-sixth year of his age, three hundred and twenty-four years previous to the Christian era. They praise his clemency, justice, and generosity; and add, that he was very subject to fits of anger, but that he recovered from them with the same facility they were brought on.

The third dynasty was that of the successors of Iskender: it is divided into two branches, the Achkanians and Achganians, which are the same as the Seleucidæ and Parthian kings of the Greek historians. The first reckoned twelve kings, and the second only eight. They each reigned during a series of more than five hundred years. As those monarchs were strangers to the country they governed, and as their history is, on that account, very superficially related by the oriental authors, while it presents nothing remarkable, I shall, in my next, pass on to the succeeding dynasty.

LETTER XVI.

Continuation of the same Subject.—Dynasty of the Sassanians or Sassanidæ.

Teheran, Dec. 30, 1807.

The origin of the Sassanidæ, who are the same as the Artaxerxides of the Greeks, ascends, according to some authors, to the year 219, and to others, to the year 220 of the vulgar era. Ardchir Babegan, or Artaxerxes I. laid the foundation of this new dynasty. Descended from the Kaianites, whom Alexander dethroned, he delivered Persia from the yoke of foreign monarchs, the successors of that prince; he expelled the Achganians, and by his conquests obtained possession of various parts of Asia—he reigned fourteen years. Ardchir was the first who took the title of Chahin Chah, or king of kings.

Schapour I. son of Ardchir, ascended the throne very young. His maternal uncle, who refused the crown when offered to him by the nobility, was at the same time his guardian and prime minister. When he became of age, he traversed the provinces of his vast empire, and founded several

cities in it, amongst others, that of Nichabour, in Khorassan.

If the Greek and Roman historians can be believed, for they generally speak with anger and contempt of the Orientals, whom they treat as barbarians, Schapour was a monster stained with every vice: he flayed alive the emperor Valerian, who fell into his power. The Persian writers do not, however, mention the circumstance, and without giving much praise to this prince, they still say his reign was very glorious.

According to Mirkhond, Schapour was murdered after a reign of thirty-four years, by several of his courtiers, who feared the punishment due to some unjust acts they had committed. Availing themselves of a stormy night, they entered the tent of the king, and killed him, together with all his followers whom they found there; they then set fire to it, and spread the report that he was destroyed by lightning.

Hormouz I. his successor, was but a short time on the throne. This monarch was much given to the study of the sciences, and especially the mathematics. He is said to have rendered his people happy by his wisdom and love of peace. Several of his maxims are still quoted; amongst others the following: "Kings are like fire, which warms those who remain at a certain distance from it, while it consumes all who approach too near to it!"

The reign of his son, Bairam I. was also of short duration: he is accused of treachery and

cruelty to the heresiach Manes. This maxim, however, is attributed to him, and forms a very remarkable contrast with his reputed disposition. "It is impossible to define the virtue called humanity, because all others are comprised in it."

Bairam II. who, it is said, was only the adopted son of his predecessor, resembled him, at first, in cruelty and tyranny, which obtained for him the surname of Khalil, or unjust. It is endeavoured, however, to excuse him, by saying that his inflexibility proceeded rather from an ill-understood excess of justice and severity, than a natural inclination to vice, and that he improved himself by the counsels of the magi, and became afterwards one of the best of the Persian kings. He remained seventeen years on the throne.

The reign of Bairam III. his successor, who had been governor of Sigistan during the life of his father, offers nothing remarkable: it continued thirteen years.

Narsi, his son, merited the love of his subjects, by the constant care he took of their welfare. Attacked by the Romans, he was vanquished by the troops of that conquering people, and lost several provinces: this caused him to die of grief, after a reign of nine years.

Hormouz II. his son, was an excellent prince. Persia was indebted to him for the institution of a sovereign court, where the lowest of his subjects might bring a complaint against the principal nobility of the kingdom: it is asserted that he often

presided in it himself. He directed his attention to commerce, and caused a city to be built in Kerman, which, from his name, was called Hormouz, or Ormus. The inhabitants, in order to secure themselves from the incursions of a neighbouring people, who were jealous of their prosperity, subsequently removed their residence to an island in the Persian Gulf, to which they gave the name of their first establishment. Hormouz also built several other cities in Khousistan, or the mountainous country, and died generally lamented, after having reigned nine years.

Schapour II. is surnamed by some authors, Zoul Aktaf (the breaker of shoulders), and by others, Zoul Aknaf (the winged). According to some of them, he merited the first epithet, for having caused the right shoulder to be broken of all the Arabs whom he found capable of bearing arms, after a great victory in Yemen; according to others, he was called the winged, for having, after that victory, taken the Arabs under his protection. I prefer adopting this latter opinion, because he is otherwise represented as a great prince and renowned warrior.

Schapour having had the imprudence to leave his states, and reconnoitre by his own observations the forces of the Greek empire, was discovered in Constantinople, and arrested by order of the emperor, whose troops immediately attacked Persia. This unfortunate prince would, no doubt, have ended his days in slavery, had he not found

the means of escaping from his enemy. It is said he owed his liberation to a lady of the court, who fled along with him. When Schapour arrived in Media, he soon surprised the Greeks, cut them in pieces, and retook all the provinces he had lost. To perpetuate the memory of this great event, he built the city of Kasbinn in the very place he had accomplished his designs.

This prince had other wars to maintain against the Arabs, and Dilemites, a people that inhabited the borders of the Caspian Sea. Already occupied with the first, he was beaten by the latter, and consented to pay them a tribute, until having vanquished the Arabs, he freed himself from that obligation, and subjected the Dilemites to his own power. Schapour also defeated the emperor Julian, about the year 373 of the Christian era. He died, after having given laws to Persia and several other neighbouring nations, during a reign of seventy-two years.

Notwithstanding his advanced age, Schapour left a son who was still too young to govern the state; and the Persians, fearing the troubles almost inseparable from a minority, requested Ardchir II. his near relation, to accept the crown, on the condition of resigning it at a future day to the rightful heir. He consented to it, and justified the confidence of the nation during twelve years that he possessed the throne.

Schapour III. governed only five years and some months. He is represented as a mild and

pacific prince. Contemporary of Theodore, he lived on good terms with that emperor, and the two monarchs sent ambassadors to each other.

His son, Bairam IV. was the heir of his throne and virtues. The events of his reign are but little known: it is merely said that he lost his life by the shot of an arrow, in the midst of an insurrection of the nobility. He had a son named Jezdgerd, who merited the title of El Essim, or the wicked. During his father's life, his good qualities had given the greatest hopes to Persia; but, when elevated to the throne, he manifested both avarice and cruelty.

The extreme youth of his son, and the still hateful memory of the father, induced the nobility to confer the crown on a Persian lord named Khousrew, worthy of it from his virtues, but who is not included in the number of the kings of Persia. He afterwards transferred it to Bairam V. son of Jezdgerd El Essim.

Bairam V. made himself beloved by his valour and justice: he was surnamed Djihour, which means a wild ass, on account of his vigour and celerity in military expeditions. However, his inclination for pleasures and festivals gave the king of Turkestan an opportunity of invading his territories; and Bairam, though very brave, not having sufficient forces to oppose him, was obliged to fly into Armenia, with a body of one thousand cavalry. The king of Turkestan, thinking he had abandoned his states for ever, soon

dispersed his troops all over Persia, and they imprudently engaged in pillage, and all other excesses supposed to be lawful in a conquered country. Bairam, who was informed of it, coasted the borders of the Caspian Sea, took the Turks by surprise, completely defeated them, and with his own hand cut off the head of their king. All Persia was thus delivered, as if by enchantment, from the presence of enemies, and recovered its tranquillity and independence.

Bairam could not long lead an inactive life; once more abandoning the cares of government to his brother Narsi, he departed for India, and married the daughter of one of the kings of that country. However, in a more advanced age, he resumed the reins of royalty, and was ever after occupied with promoting the happiness of his people. He had also carried on war successfully against the Greeks and Arabs. He died whilst hunting; but, according to some historians, during a forced march.

Jezdgerd II. his son, restrained the excesses of the nobility, and the licentiousness of the soldiery, whom, however, he paid liberally. Excepting in war, when he was too prodigal of the blood of his subjects, he displayed great moderation in all his conduct. Persia was agitated with long disturbances after his death, in consequence of the preference he had given to his second over his eldest son. He died, after a reign of eighteen years.

Hormouz III. the youngest of his sons, held the crown only one year: he was dethroned by Firouz, his elder brother, who at first caused him to be confined in a dungeon, and subsequently ordered him to be decapitated, after having seized the sceptre.

The reign of Firouz was fatal to Persia: it commenced with a famine, which the nation considered as a chastisement from heaven, and a divine vengeance for his barbarity to his brother. Firouz himself, whether from remorse or policy, became moderate for some time; but soon led by his natural inclination to evil, he ceased to restrain himself, and resumed his original character. He entered into war twice with the king of the Haithelites, who had assisted him to mount the throne, and was killed in battle when fighting against that nation; but in spite of their ill-fortune, the Persians obtained an honourable peace.

Cobad had every advantage of person joined to all those of the mind in his favour; but nature had denied him the qualities of the heart, and those sentiments of humanity, without which no sovereign can be really good. He caused Saouk, who had been prime minister under the preceding reigns, to be assassinated, and signalized his reign by a thousand extravagancies, similar to those of Nero and Caligula. He wanted to establish a community of property and wives, and permit brothers to marry their sisters. The

Greek historians were mistaken when they asserted that it was a constant custom, and authorized by the magi, since it was this new law that caused the nobility to dethrone Cobad, and imprison him, after having given the regency to Djamasp, a personage highly esteemed for his eminent qualities. The queen, who alone could speak to the dethroned prince, but without seeing him, found means to gain over the officer who had charge of him; seduced by the charms of that princess, he often permitted her to see her husband, and in consequence of this liberty, she effected his escape by changing dresses with him.

Cobad reached the states of a neighbouring prince, and regained, by his assistance, a throne, of which he had rendered himself unworthy. Djamasp himself went to do homage to him. His subsequent conduct, however, caused his former errors to be forgotten, and he died beloved and regretted by his subjects.

I have now arrived at one of the most memorable periods of Persian history, and to name a king more known to us than any other, and whose memory is still the most honoured of all the modern Persian monarchs.

Khousrew Nouchirewan, or Kosroes the Great, mounted the throne about the year 531 of the vulgar era. This is a name the oriental historians never fail to quote, when they wish to speak of a great sovereign. Kosroes united every

species of glory — well tried valour, wise and enlightened policy, and a philosophic mind. If he caused the death of a leader to a certain sect named Mahzdek, it was not from the latter's principles of religion, but because he had disturbed the tranquillity of the state, by acts of personal violence; he did not otherwise persecute sectarians, who by this exertion of power returned to their duty. Kosroes reconquered the provinces lost by his predecessor; he vanquished the Greeks, transported the inhabitants of Antioch into Irak, and repulsed the Turks of Transoxus, who were always ready to profit by the distractions of the kingdom; in short, he pushed the boundaries of his empire as far as India and Arabia.

This prince espoused a Christian lady, celebrated for her beauty: by her he had a son, who was brought up by his mother in the principles of Christianity, and who, guided wholly by his zeal for that religion, and aversion to the doctrines of Zoroaster, would have excited disturbances in the state, had not the king taken the precaution to arrest him. He, however, succeeded in escaping from his prison, and, deceived by the false report of his father's death, he took arms for the purpose of seizing on the government. Being subsequently informed of the falsity of that rumour, he refused to submit, and perished in a battle, though his father had ordered him to be spared: while dying, he sent

a request to his mother that he might be interred among the Christians.

Kosroes, in his old age, resigned the throne to his son Hormouz, after having given him the most prudent advice. He had for his vizir Buzurdji Mihr, one of the greatest men of his time, who was also prime minister in the following reign. He died at the age of eighty years, after a reign of forty-eight. It is asserted, that in his youth he once said to a lady whom he loved, "Royalty is no doubt charming, but it would be still more delightful, if possessed for ever." "Had that been the case," she replied, "it would not have come to your turn to enjoy it."

Hormouz IV. otherwise called Hormizdas, was a weak prince without energy: guided at first by the counsels of the vizir Buzurdji Mihr, his beneficence and moderation obtained happy days for Persia; but when that great minister, worn out with years, was obliged to retire from public affairs, Hormouz, surrounded by courtiers and flatterers, abandoned himself entirely to those propensities which were natural to him. Addicted to the most licentious debauchery, he committed a thousand cruelties and unjust actions, disgusted every one, and destroyed a great number of the nobility who were obnoxious to him. At length he so far forgot the duties of sovereignty, as to abolish the tribunals established by his father, insisting that he alone should render justice to his subjects.

Persia was at that time invaded by enemies, always ready to take advantage of its internal distractions. An able general, named Bairam, repulsed them; but, being soon after insulted in the most degrading manner by the king, he took arms against him, and engaged Khousrew Pervitz, his eldest son, in the rebellion: Hormouz was strangled, soon afterwards, but against the will of Pervitz, who promised to revenge his murder.

This promise induced Bairam, who thought he had claims to the gratitude of Khousrew, to withdraw his support from him, that he might act only for himself. He seized on the royal authority, but the former having obtained assistance from the Greek emperor, defeated Bairam, and thus became tranquil possessor of his father's throne.

Fortunate in his military expeditions, Khousrew conquered Syria and several islands of the Mediterranean; but his vanity, taste for pomp, and cruelty, rendered him odious to his subjects. Towards the termination of his life, his prodigality changed into sordid avarice, and it is said that at his death, immense sums were found heaped up in the vaults of his palace.

The oriental historians, whose imaginations are never more fruitful than when they can exercise them on the marvellous, give us a proof of exaggeration in their description of a palace built by his grandfather, and which, according to them, he caused to be embellished: "there were in it,"

they say, "forty thousand pillars of silver; the cieling was decorated with a thousand gilt mirrors, so placed as to represent the planets and different constellations; the walls were covered with the most rich and beautiful stuffs; it was under this palace that the treasures were kept. There was, besides, a seraglio which contained three thousand free women, and twelve thousand slaves, all chosen from amongst the most beautiful females in the empire. The usual guard of the king, was six thousand picked men; and in his stables were maintained for his service six thousand horses, twelve thousand camels of large size, eight thousand of middle size, and nine hundred and sixty elephants, which served only for the army."

This description would make an admirable figure in some of our modern romances; it might also, if necessary, invigorate the genius of a melo-dramatist, and assist the decorators of such shows: but it is proper to inform another class, that this magnificence of Khousrew Pervitz, which could only be maintained at the expence of his subjects, was the cause of his ruin. He was therefore driven from the throne, and his eldest son placed on it in his stead.

Cobad Chirouie, the name of his son, lest the crown might be wrested from him, determined to secure it by an atrocious crime. He caused his father to be assassinated in prison by a young Persian, whom he afterwards destroyed; and in a

tardy repentance ordered a magnificent funeral for the unfortunate Khousrew Pervitz.

This monster, who had commenced with being a parricide, subsequently put to death all his brothers. He is said to have died of remorse. Ardchir III. his son, succeeded him when only seven years of age. This prince was dethroned by Chehriar, a general who possessed the confidence of the troops.

Cheriar is not reckoned by historians amongst the kings of Persia, owing to the shortness of his reign. His ingratitude to the army, to which he owed his elevation, lost him his firmest support; and his severity to the people, whom he overloaded with taxes, drew on him universal dislike. He was killed at the gate of his palace, by three brothers devoted to Touran Douhkt, the eldest princess of the royal family, whom they placed on the throne.

Touran Douhkt was contemporary with the Caliph Omar; she lived too short a time for the happiness of Persia, having, according to the general belief, died by poison. This queen greatly relieved the people, so tyrannically treated in preceding reigns, and she also restrained the oppressions of the nobility. Her prime minister, Ferok Zad, a very able general, made her respected abroad, and defeated the Arabs in several battles.

The successor of this princess being found incapable of reigning, he was deposed in the course

of a few days, when Azurmi, sister to Touran Douhkt succeeded him.

This princess possessed wit and beauty; her pride made her reject the proposal of the governor of Khorassan, who wished to marry her. Enraged at her refusal, he used threats, and the queen had him put to death. This was the signal for the revolt of his son, who defeated the queen in a battle, took her prisoner, and in turn, deprived her of life; he then retired to his father's government, and succeeded in maintaining himself in it, the right to the throne having devolved to Ferok Zad, a prince descended from the royal blood.

Ferok was not capable of governing a great empire in such disturbed times. Possessing all the qualities that render a private person estimable, nature had denied him those which are necessary for sovereigns. He died, poisoned by one of his slaves, after having reigned only one month.

He was replaced by Jezdgerd III. the last vestige of the Sassanides, who was also the last of the fire-worshipping kings. Jezdgerd took the reins of government in the most difficult circumstances: the Arabs had become powerful, and all their efforts now tended to join Persia to their numerous other conquests. It was in vain that the king opposed Ferok, who had formerly gained brilliant victories over them; his day was passed. After a desperate battle, followed by a

slaughter which lasted three whole days, the Arabs, already possessed of all the strong places, remained masters of the kingdom, and the monarch was obliged to fly into Khorassan. During the remainder of his life, he was only enabled to retain that province, and those of Kerman and Sigistan. In spite of the efforts made by some governors to retain their independence in the districts confided to them, the whole of Persia was soon subjected by the followers of Mahomet, and united to the new empire of the Caliphs.

LETTER XVII.

Sequel and Conclusion of the same Subject.—Empire of the Caliphs; other Mahometan Dynasties.—Taherites; Soffarites; Samanides; Gaznevides; Gaurides; Dilemites; Bouides; Seldjucides; Atabeks of Syria; Kharismians; Mogols; Kara Kouiounlu and Ak Kouinlu Turkomans; Mouhafferians; Courtches; Sephewies or Sephis; Thamas Kouli Khan; modern Revolutions in Persia down to the reigning Prince.

Teheran, Jan. 10, 1808.

You have seen by what a succession of events Persia fell under the power of the Arabs. It was about the year 632 of the Christian era that this conquest was effected, and the Caliphs preserved it during nearly two centuries.

In 820, or about that time, other dynasties succeeded on the ruins of their power; and though the greater part of them only reigned over some portion of Persia, yet their history is essentially connected with that of the empire.

The Taherites were the first to revolt against the Caliphs. They possessed Khorassan from the year 820 until 864, when they were driven out and replaced by the Soffarites, who commenced aggrandizing themselves out of that province. The Samanides, Gaznevides, Gaurides, and Dilemites then appeared, and succeeded each other rapidly in the short space of a hundred and forty years. After having extended their power over different parts of Persia, at the expense of that of the Caliphs, the latter ceded to the superior force of the Bovides, who expelled them about the year 933. Those princes again re-assembled the Persians as a nation, subdued their enemies, and gave law as far as Diarbekir. The founder of this new monarchy was a person named Ali, son of Bovie, a poor fisherman on the shore of the Caspian Sea; whom, however, several authors assert to have been descended from the family of the Sassanides. Bovie had three sons, Ali, Hassan, and Ahmed, all of whom had at first entered into the service of Mardavide, the last Dilemite king. Ali revolted against that prince, defeated his troops and the Arabs, divided his conquests with his two brothers, Hassan and Ahmed, reserving to himself the kingdom of Persia.

History affords nothing very remarkable until the establishment of the Seldjucides, who, in their turn, rose on the ruin of the Bouides. The latter had reigned from 933 to 1056.

The family of the Seldjucides, originally of a wandering Turkish tribe, formed five considerable branches, which commanded a great part of Asia; but the most powerful were those of Persia.

Their founder in Persia was Thogrul Beg, son of Mikhael, one of the chiefs of the Turkish na-

tion, himself the son of Seldjuk, who gave his name to all the family.

Thogrul Deg was a great commander. He defeated the Gaznevides in a bloody battle, delivered the Mussulmen of Persia from their oppressors, conquered the Greeks, and caused himself to be proclaimed king of the whole nation. The caliph, Kaim Ben Illah, who sought the support and protection of the Seldjucides, confirmed him in the possession of his throne.

The empire of the Seldjucides terminated in the person of another Thogrul about the year 1194. Other princes of the same family reigned in Kerman, as I have already said, who are also called Kaderites, from the name of their founder, Kaderd.

The Atabeks of Syria, were in the beginning, only tutors to the princes of the royal family; like the mayors of the palace in France, they seized on the sovereign authority, and remained possessors of the throne, from the year 1195 to 1224, when they were expelled by the Kharismians, princes of Kharismé, formerly tributaries to the Seldjucides. Bousteghin Gurge, was the first king of that country, situated to the east of the Caspian Sea, between Oxus and Iaxartes.

The Moguls, Genghiz Khanians, and Turkomans, (founders of the dynasties of Kara Kouiounlu,) (the black sheep;) and of Ak Kouiounlu, (the white sheep), the Mouhafferians, and Courtches,

afterwards successively occupied the throne of Persia.

Towards the year 1500, commenced the reign of the Sephis, who are improperly termed the Sophis of Persia, by several authors. I should here inform you, that Sephi is the family name of this race, and did not signify king, as might be supposed in reading the works of our old travellers.

The elevation of the Sephis to the Persian throne is attributed to the noble conduct of Cheik Sephi, who lived at Ardewil, in Azerbaidjan, during the time of Tamerlane. It is said that from his great reputation, the above conqueror went to visit him, and desired he would make some demand, upon which Cheik Sephi requested him to spare the lives of thirty thousand prisoners of Caramania, whom he had taken after his victory over Bajazet, Sultan of the Turks, and who he intended to have massacred at a grand festival. Tamerlane consented, and the generosity of Cheik Sephi, who sent the captives home, after having distributed money and clothes amongst them, attracted universal admiration, gaining a great number of friends and partisans for his family. One of his descendants, named Ismael, availed himself of this popularity, to seize on Tauris, where the court was then held, dethrone the king, Alvand, vanquish his brother Mourad Khan, and place the crown of Persia on his own head.

The greatest monarch of this dynasty was Chah

Abbas I. surnamed the Great, the seventh of the Sephewian kings, who ascended the throne in 1587. He began by delivering Persia from the continual invasions of the Usbeck Tartars and Turks, and afterwards returned to establish the seat of his empire at Ispahan, the capital of Irak Adjemi, which he embellished and enlarged. He transported the Armenians of Julfa from the banks of the Araxes, and established them in a suburb, to which he gave the name of that town. He also retook Tauris, Eriwan, Curdistan, Mazenderan, and Guilan, from the Turks, crowning those first exploits with a glorious peace which lasted twenty years.

Historians whilst praising the great qualities of Chah Abbas I. and extolling his love of justice, cannot, however, avoid accusing him with the death of his son Sephi Mirza, whom he caused to be assassinated from jealousy of his merit. He afterwards testified the greatest remorse at it, but this crime is nevertheless an indelible stain on his memory.

Chah Abbas was not partial to courtiers; he liked to humble them, and the following anecdote may give an idea of the little estimation in which he held those who pass their lives in servile flatteries to their sovereign, and in applauding all his actions.

The custom of smoking tobacco, was even then common amongst the Persians, and displeased him very much. In order to put an end

to that offensive and vicious habit, Chah Abbas one day invited all the nobility of his court to smoke some delicious tobacco which he had received from Chiraz:* no one missed attending the invitation, and to each a *kalioun* or pipe was offered, filled with straw. The king requested their opinion on the quality of the tobacco, when they all exclaimed that it was exquisite, and impossible to find better! "What," said Abbas, laughing, "is then the flavour of that drug, which cannot be distinguished from straw?" and dismissed the pliant courtiers, full of confusion.

Chah Abbas I. also conquered Georgia, and took Bagdad from the Turks, in 1622; but according to others, in 1524, he deprived the Grand Signor, of Arabia, Bassora on the Persian Gulf, a part of Anatolia, and advanced as far as Trebizond on the Black Sea.

This prince was more severe to the nobility than to the people; he degraded the former as much as he could, and succeeded in annihilating the military power of the Courtches, who composed almost the whole of the Persian armies: these he replaced by troops composed chiefly of Christians, and was the first who laid the foundation of that absolute power which the kings of Persia have enjoyed to this day.

* The *tambako*, or tobacco of Chiraz, is reputed as being the best in Persia.

The Courtches were, according to Chardin, the same as the Turkomans or Saracens, who extended their conquests so far. Their families were so united amongst each other, that they formed, as it were, but one, whose strength and power commanded the whole kingdom. Proud of having enabled the descendants of Cheik Sephi to ascend the throne, they had acquired a power as formidable as that of the Janizaries, and made the kings themselves tremble. The Efchars, a valiant and numerous tribe, who held the first rank amongst that nation, had then a chief named Mar Zeher Sultan, whom Abbas the Great wanted to destroy.

The mother, or one of the wives of Abbas, had an intrigue, of which Mar Zeher Sultan was informed. Disgusted by such conduct, he went to the tent of that princess, requested to speak to her on an important affair, and stabbed her through the curtain, behind which she had placed herself to hear him. Chah Abbas, then absent, temporized at first, and deferred his revenge to a more favourable opportunity. Seeing his despotism consolidated by degrees, he one day ordered a great cauldron to be prepared in the palace, and sent for the criminal. "Mar Zeher Sultan," said he, "I want your poison"—"I am going to give it to myself," replied the intrepid Efchar; and suddenly threw himself into the cauldron full of boiling oil. The Chah, though struck with such extraordinary courage, merely said, *Adjaib*

kafir est! "He is a strong fellow!" This death was a signal of proscription for the tribe of the Efchars, most of which fell soon after; the remainder found safety only in flight and emigration. Chah Abbas, however, was obliged subsequently to have recourse to them when he had to combat the Ottoman forces; but he divided and sub-divided those tribes, to diminish their influence, and sow jealousy and discord amongst them. The Efchars still preserved the names, regulations, and divisions given to them by that prince. Chah Abbas I. died at the close of the year 1629, at Fehrabad, a town in Mazenderan, which he had himself founded. Sefi Mirza, his grandson and successor, was a monster who wallowed in the blood of his nearest relations. In his reign the Turks retook Bagdad, of which Abbas the Great had obtained possession twenty-six years before, and they have ever since retained it.

Chah Abbas II. the son of Sefi Mirza, was only thirteen years old when he came to the throne. He is more known to Europeans than the sovereigns his predecessors. Chardin and Tavernier, who travelled in Persia during his reign, have handed down several features of his character. He is accused of many acts of cruelty, and a great inclination to drunkenness; but his affability to the Europeans has gained panegyrists for him amongst the latter, who were admitted to his intimacy, and even to sit at his table.

Tavernier acknowledges that he was often inflamed with rage, and rather too fond of wine, though in other respects beneficent, and courteous to foreigners.

Chah Abbas II. died in 1666, aged only thirty-eight years. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Chah Sephi. It was in the reign of this prince the first symptoms appeared of those revolutions that have so long ravaged Persia, and from which she is even now scarcely released.

But the most remarkable period was that of the succession to the throne of Thamas Kouli Khan, in 1736. This prince was one of the principal chiefs of the tribe of Efchars. He had already vanquished the Afghans and Turks, retaking from the latter all their conquests in Persia, when he expelled Echref, the relative and successor of an Afghan, named Mahmoud, who had seated himself on the throne of Chah Hussein. He raised Chah Thamas, the last scion of the Sephewie family, a weak prince, incapable of wielding the sceptre, in the violent convulsions which then agitated the empire. He soon seized the person of that prince, of whom he called himself the slave, imprisoned him at Mechhed, proclaimed his young son king, and caused himself to be declared regent of the kingdom.

Confiding in the strength of his army, whose exploits had excited great enthusiasm in the nobility whom he had gained over to his side, Thamas Kouli Khan at length threw off the mask, and had

himself proclaimed king by the chiefs of the nation.

As soon as he was master of the throne, he destroyed, with the assistance of his troops, those very nobles who had favoured his ambition, and seized on the property of the mollahs, the revenues of which are said to have amounted to a million of tomans, to distribute them amongst the soldiery.*

Nadir Chah was gratified in braving the hatred and indignation of the Persians: he employed them but little in his army, which was composed of Indians, Usbeck Tartars, and Afghans, sectaries of the doctrine of Omar, which was also his own; but he could never cause this faith to be adopted by a nation that he loaded with taxes, and treated like a conquered country. He, however, was the author of several very wise regulations in the civil and military administrations.

All his genius seemed to be especially directed to this latter department. Being at first fortunate in all his expeditions, he defeated the Great Mogul Muhammed, seized his person and territories, and caused himself to be proclaimed Emperor of Indostan, at Delhi, from which city he carried off immense treasures. His policy induced him to replace that prince on the throne after-

* The toman was then 1*l.* 18*s.* 9*d.* sterling; it is now only equal to 18*s.* 4*d.*

wards, on condition, that he should be tributary to Persia, and he returned to Ispahan, in 1740.

The conclusion of his reign was marked with reverses: he failed before Derbend, and the fury with which this ill success inspired him, led to a thousand acts of barbarity and cruelty. All his latter expeditions into Irak Arabe, Armenia, Diarbeckr, to Bagdad, Bassora, Van, and Mosul, only produced useless ravages; his troops were repulsed in all parts by the Turks, and Nadir Chah alarmed at the progress of a rebellion that had already spread over the whole empire, was obliged to conclude a peace.

At length he fell under the weapons of his enemies, the number of whom was every day augmented by the ferocity of his disposition: he was assassinated in 1745, by several conspirators, at the head of whom was Muhammed Kouli Khan, his nearest relation. He was then sixty-six years of age, and had reigned thirteen.

Nadir Chah was succeeded by his nephew, Ali Kouli Khan, who, on ascending the throne, took the name of Adit Chah, or the Just King: his reign was of short duration; but he had sufficient time to revenge the death of his uncle, on the traitor Muhammed Kouli Khan, one of whose eyes, it is said, he caused to be torn out, and that he afterwards delivered him to the wives of Nadir Chah, by whom Muhammed was stabbed. His brother, Ibrahim, who dethroned him, was almost

immediately overturned by Chah Rouhk, the grandson of Nadir, and a descendant of the Sephis, by his mother. But this prince, whose reign was marked by fresh disturbances and new factions, was soon obliged to give place to another descendant, in a direct line, from the Sephi family, named Chah Ismael, who owed his elevation to Ali Merdan Khan, the commander of the troops.

Kerim Khan, of the tribe of Zend, one of the officers of Nadir Chah, seized on the government in 1749, and, according to others, in 1758; he did not take the title of King, but contented himself with that of Vekil, or Regent of the kingdom. He died in 1779, regretted by all Persia, having contributed much to its glory and happiness.

Ali Murad and the other successors of his family, disputed amongst themselves, successively, for the throne. All this part of the modern history of Persia, until the elevation of Aga Muhammed Khan, is merely a long series of horrors, massacres, together with those disorders which usually spring from anarchy.

Aga Muhammed Khan, having been mutilated in his youth, by order of Kerim Khan, who expected by that means to debar his access to the throne, had succeeded in gaining the support of a considerable party in Mazenderan, his native country. He destroyed, by treachery, Djaffer Khan, and the unfortunate Loutf Ali Khan, his son, to whom the wishes of nearly all the nation

had granted the crown, and he himself grasped the supreme power, but without taking the title of Chah, he limited himself to that of Vekil, like his immediate predecessor.

Persia groaned, during many years, under the despotism of this ferocious eunuch, who was preparing to march to Teflis, and other parts of Georgia, whence he wished to expel the Russians, when he was murdered, on the 14th of May, 1797, by one of his servants, the secret agent of Sadet Khan, who had pretensions to the crown, though he subsequently relinquished them.

At length Baba Khan, Governor of Chiraz, and nephew of Aga Muhammed Khan, who had long been designed by him as his successor, flew to Teheran, in 1798, on the first news of the death of his uncle, and caused himself to be proclaimed king, under the name of Feth Ali Chah, who is the reigning monarch.

LETTER XVIII.

MODERN PERSIA; Climate, Productions, Commerce, Population, Military Tribes, Tadjie, Armenians, Jews, Parsees, Government Titles of Mirza Khan, &c. Chah Zades.—Selam of the King.

Teheran, Jan. 30th, 1808.

IRAN is the true name of Persia amongst the Orientals. The Turks give it that of Adjem, or the country of fools, in contempt of the Persians: it would therefore be an insult to them to call it so in their presence, as it would be unintelligible to them to term it Persia. The latter name proceeds from the province of Fars or Farsistan, which Europeans have probably found more soft, and from which they have adopted that of Persia.

Iran, in its present state, comprehends the countries situated between the 25th and 42d degrees of North latitude. It is bounded on the north by the most eastern part of the range of Caucasus, Georgia, and the Caspian Sea; on the south, by the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean; on the east by Indostan; and on the west by Asiatic Turkey. Its extent is about 450 leagues from east to west, and 360 from north to south. Often dismembered, in consequence of the revolutions by which it has

been so long convulsed, it is still composed of the following provinces: on the north, towards the Caspian Sea, Guilan, of which the capital is Recht; Mazenderan, the principal towns of which are Esterabad, Sari, and Fehrabad, built by Abbas the Great; Persian Armenia, the capital Erivan, to the east, three-fourths of Khorassan, the capital of which is Mechked, and the most considerable cities Nichabour, Kerat, and Merw. Dilem, part of Irak Adjemi, the principal cities of which are Teheran and Kasbinn; to the north-west, Azerbaidjan, the capital Tauris; to the west, Persian Kurdistan, principal cities, Sine, Hamadan, [Ecbatana], Kerman Chah; in the centre, Irak Adjemi, principal cities, Ispahan, Koum and Kachan, to the south, Lourestan, (the mountainous country), principal cities, Chuchder, [Suza] and Hafizé; Farsistan, capital of Chiraz; Laristan and Denderat, or the country of ports, on the Persian Gulf, known also by the name of Dechtistan, the principal cities and ports being Lar, Bender Abassi, Bender bou Cheher, Bender Kongo, Bender Rik. Kerman, the capital Kerman.

The climate of Persia is dry in general, but it varies according to the provinces. Those of the north enjoy a mild and moderate temperature during the summer, and the cold is felt in winter; whilst those of the centre, and principally the south, are hot and burning. Often sandy and barren, sometimes impregnated with salt, which

communicates its taste to the streams, that irrigate the land; the soil in many places owes its fertility to the numerous artificial canals which have been cut with great art, and preserved with care by the Persians. The most beautiful and productive of all the provinces, is Tarsistan. The sweet and high flavoured wines of Chiraz are famous throughout the East; and their reputation has even reached European countries. Those of Ispahan, limpid and transparent as the glass which contains them, are stronger, and the red wine of Teheran, and its environs, far preferable to that of Kasbinn, which I have mentioned to you, would be found an excellent table wine any where. Persia, also, produces delicious fruits. I doubt if it be possible to find such melons as those of Ispahan and Kachan, which unite to the advantage of an exquisite flavour, that of never disagreeing with those who eat them. The peaches, apricots, and grapes, are also of superior quality; but the Persians cultivate neither cherries nor gooseberries; and the figs, though with a seducing appearance, are dangerous, especially to foreigners. As to vegetables or pulse, I know of none that merits notice.

The Persians are very partial to the cultivation of flowers, and are particularly fond of roses. These, without being of perfect beauty, yet exhale a delicious perfume, and have often inspired the muses of their poets. Saadi has given the name of Gulistan, or garden of roses, to one of his poems; and his Bostan, which means a garden, is another

proof of the predilection of the Persians for all those objects which can remind them of the beauties of nature.

The water in Persia is in general turbid and unwholesome. As there is no navigable river here, and but a very small number of rivulets, there is none used but that of the conduits, or ditches which surround the towns. The Persians are not yet acquainted with the art of constructing aqueducts; they seem to attach little importance to an object so essential to health, and merely fill their vessels at the stream which is next at hand. Such beverage often engenders pernicious fevers. We accustomed ourselves to it with great difficulty in the course of our journey, for it caused violent gripings, and it was to the water we attributed almost all the illness which happened amongst us. However, since our arrival in the capital, we are no longer subject to that inconvenience, the king having had the goodness to appropriate a spring of excellent water, at the orders of the ambassador.

Game is in great abundance and variety here. The mountains and plains near Teheran, are full of partridges and pheasants; also of antelopes, hares, wild boar, goats and asses. The Persians willingly feed on the flesh of this latter animal, which, though not firm, has a venison flavour which is not disagreeable. The wild ass is of the same size as the domestic one; its hair is a very light fawn colour, a broad stripe of beautiful black runs along the back, and across his shoulders.

Although stubborn, and caught with difficulty, he is, however, sometimes tamed.

Fish is very scarce in this capital; the little they have, is brought from a small river at a short distance from the city, and the muddy canals which flow into it; the flavour is very bad, and it is not much used. The only large fish sold in the markets, are dried and salted; they come from the Caspian Sea.

We had great difficulty one day in getting an ox killed. The Persians do not make use of its meat in their cookery, and employ this animal only in agricultural labours; its insipid taste soon induced us to renounce it. The cattle here are of small size, lean and without flavour, whilst the other species of animals are of extraordinary beauty, and excellent eating. The mutton is equal to that of Constantinople, and is the only butcher's meat that we use. Pigeons and rabbits are also a great resource to us. You see that we are not to be pitied on the score of good living; but we experience a great privation, that of having no bread. We engaged a German in Constantinople, who called himself a baker: when set to work, he was found quite ignorant of his pretended trade, and we have been obliged to content ourselves with *noun*, or Persian bread, if such a term can be applied to lumps of dough, without leven, and which has been baked for two or three minutes on a hot iron. Nothing can be more insipid to the taste; and yet the excellent quality of the wheat of this country

would have made delicious bread, if we had a person capable of preparing it.

Persia produces great quantities of fine silk and wool, drugs and cotton. Wheat, rice and barley, are also cultivated here: the latter grain, and chopped straw, serve as food to the horses, which are superb. Those of Khorassan, as well as the Turkoman and Arab horses, are the most esteemed. The second are of a long and lank shape; they have small and well made legs, a very long neck, and are indefatigable in their course. The Persians, who know no other gait than walking or galloping, are good horsemen, and check the most fiery coursers, with a curb and a simple snaffle; their saddles are smaller and less susceptible of ornaments than that of the Turks, while their stirrups have the same shape as ours.

The commerce of Persia is like that which must exist in every state, where the arts and industry are still only in their infancy; the importations greatly exceed the exportations. Turkey, Russia, and British India, are the countries which have most direct connection with this nation. From Russia it receives leather, furriery, and many other necessary articles. British India furnishes it with Chinese and Japanese porcelain, English chrystal, common glass and cloths. The exportations, chiefly directed to Turkey, consist in beautiful carpets, cotton cloths, printed calicoes, muslins, gold and silver stuffs, and silk brocades; but Persia has a large export trade in its valuable raw

silk, and the pearls found in the fisheries near the island of Kharek, in the Persian Gulf. All the internal trade is carried on by means of camels and mules, which are united in numerous caravans. The first of those animals, remarkable for their beauty and size, serve also in the cities for the conveyance of the usual merchandize, such as grain, wood and charcoal; their temperance and strength render them as useful to the Persians as to the Arabs. The Persians seldom leave their country to travel, unless it be to visit India or Turkey, in Asia. Some of them are found settled in Bagdad and Erzerum. They have a decided aversion to the sea, and do not like to trust themselves on that element. This prejudice is the reason of their not having a navy.

The actual population of Persia does not exceed twelve millions of inhabitants. The chief part forms the Schia sect of Mussulmen, which is that of Ali, separated in itself into many sub-divisions, such as the Soufis, in whose precepts some resemblance has been supposed to be found with those of the Pythagoreans; the Sahis and the Ali Oullahs, who consider Ali as God himself, &c. The Persians, who follow the religion of Mahomet, are divided into two classes: 1st, the descendants of the old Turkish or Tartar tribes, Curdes, Arabs and others, who subjected Persia at various periods to their laws, and who may be termed the conquering people; their number does not exceed eight hundred

thousand souls ; 2nd, the indigenous inhabitants, called Tadjik, descendants of the ancient Persians, who formerly embraced Islamism, either by force or persuasion. The first give them also the name of Raia, which signifies subjects, and in all their transactions together, they treat and consider them as such. There is a remarkable difference to be observed between the Persians and Turks : amongst the latter, every man who becomes a Mussulman, whatever might have been his origin, becomes by that mere circumstance, as to political rights, the equal of all those who profess the same faith.

The Sunnis Mussulmen, who acknowledge that Aboukr and Omar were true and legitimate successors to the Caliphat, are still found in rather considerable numbers in Persia, the provinces nearest to Turkey, those which are contiguous to the Usbek Tartars, and the frontiers of India ; but the fear of being persecuted by the sectaries of the predominant religion, who have expressed more hatred and contempt for them than to the Christians, and even the Jews, obliges them to conceal their principles carefully ; and they externally affect, especially in the capital, to appear as Schias. Since the last revolutions, great numbers of the Armenians, despoiled of their wealth, have emigrated to save themselves from the extortions with which they were oppressed. The Catholics, still more rare, are all foreigners, who merely sojourn in the country, but never remain

in it. As to the Jews, they are scarcely ever met with. Not less degraded here than in Turkey, they hardly dare shew themselves.

The Guebres or Parsees, are, perhaps, of all the inhabitants of Persia, those most deserving of our attention, both from their antiquity and character. Their number has diminished considerably by the persecutions which they experienced at several periods. However, there are still some families of them in Teheran and Ispahan, and a more considerable number at certain villages in the environs of Yezd and Kerman. They are the worthiest people of this country, and the Persians themselves, notwithstanding the contempt in which they affect to hold the Parsees, cannot avoid doing them this justice. In general they follow the professions of gardeners, masons, grooms, &c. and the most faithful domestics procured, here, are of this sect. It is very difficult to know any thing certain of their tenets ; they seem to make mysteries of them, and do not like to be questioned on the subject. The following is all I have been able to learn.

Sectaries of Zerdoucht, or Zoroaster, the Guebres, adore one only deity, and render a species of adoration to fire, because, of course, they consider it as the first and most useful of the elements. It is also said, that the origin of this veneration proceeds from a pretended miracle effected by God, in favour of Zerdoucht, whilst yet an infant. King Nimrod, informed by his astrologers that a

prophet would be born, who was destined at some time to deprive him of his crown, ordered that all the pregnant women should be put to death; one alone escaped that proscription, and brought forth Zoroaster. The king caused the child to be thrown into a blazing fire; but the burning pile was changed into a bed of roses. Some sparks of that sacred fire, saved by the most zealous partizans of the prophet, were carefully preserved, and confided to the safeguard of the priests of the new religion. However this may be, the Guebres have great respect for that element; they take care not to extinguish it, and would rather suffer their houses to be consumed, than profanely raise a hand against this vivifying principle of nature.*

The Guebres have a high priest, who is denominated Cazy by our ancient travellers; and who is now known here by the appellation of Grand Mollah. They consider the Mussulmen as im-

* This cursory notice of the Guebres, is not a little calculated to excite curiosity and interest, at the present moment, when the question of RELIGION, like all others connected with human happiness, are agitated by such numerous sects, and various parties. The sublime and beautiful doctrines of ZOROASTER, have frequently attracted the notice of philosophers both Pagan and Christian; while many of those writers who argue in favour of the perfectibility of our species, do not hesitate to proclaim that, as civilization advances, there is a proportionate tendency in the minds of men, to found their religious dogmas on the UNITY OF GOD. Though so far beyond his humble comprehension, the Editor hopes to have an opportunity of returning to the consideration of this momentous question on a future occasion.

pure beings, and they dare not touch several kinds of animals, without supposing themselves defiled by the contact. The cat is that which they hold most in horror and aversion. On the contrary, they have a particular esteem for the dog. Tavernier, who asserts he was in habits of intimacy with them during three months, says, that they apply the mouth of a dog to that of a dying person, to receive his soul, and then deliver it into the care of an angel. He also declares, as well as many others, that they do not bury their dead; and that they suspend them to posts, the head turned towards the east, in a place encompassed with walls, where they become the prey of ravens. I cannot attempt to verify those assertions, for I have not been able to ascertain them myself; and I would rather leave you in doubt on this subject, than offer false or even dubious testimony.

The government of Persia is a completely despotic monarchy, which is not tempered with any intermediate power, nor counterbalanced, as in Turkey, by any civil or military body, such as the Oulemas and Janizaries. The poet Saadi, in one of the histories of his Gulistan, makes a vizir say: "*He who does not think like the Prince, washes his hands in his own blood. If the king were to say in broad day that it was night, it would be necessary to exclaim, behold the moon and stars!*" These maxims, worthy of being recommended to professional courtiers and adorers of absolute power, would find but few adherents amongst the friends

of constitutional government. They will depict the immense extent of a Persian monarch's authority, better than any reflections I can make; nad are more than ever applicable to the present time. Since the reign of Chah Abbas I. and the annihilation of the power of the Courtches, the will of the king is in Persia the sole and supreme law; it frequently supersedes even the Koran, the only religious, administrative, and judicial code of Mahometans. The king has full power to dispose of the lives and properties of his subjects; and he grants but a very small portion of his authority to his ministers and the governors of his provinces. He alone can condemn to death in the capital; while the sentences of death issued in other parts of the kingdom, by the chah zades, and khans, must be submitted to his approbation, before they are executed, unless he should have invested the latter with extraordinary powers. At Teheran, all criminal affairs are brought directly before the king, and a prompt and severe justice, always founded on the law of retaliation, is the punishment of the guilty. The vizirs only take cognizance of civil cases; each party pleads his own cause, and he who shouts the loudest, or best pays his judges, usually triumphs over his adversary. I shall hereafter return to this subject.

It would be misapplying the word constitution, to use it in speaking of Persia: every thing here is done arbitrarily, or from custom. The order of succession to the throne, is not regulated by any

specific law: the sovereign chooses at will, one of his sons, or even of his relations, whom he deems fit to nominate for his successor. It is sufficient to belong to the royal family to have the right of succeeding to the throne. You may have seen by my preceding letters, that this condition has not been indispensable, and that many of the latter princes have had no other title than their swords.

The kings of Persia have, in almost all ages, practised the barbarous custom of cutting or tearing out the eyes of their brothers, or those of their relations, whose ambition they suppose they had reason to fear. Feth Ali Chah himself is not free from this stain: his only brother was deprived of sight, in the fear, it is said, that he might disturb him in the possession of the throne. Since our arrival in this capital, that prince has died of indigestion, or rather has fallen a victim to the ignorance of a physician in bleeding him: the king, on learning this event, shewed every sign of the most profound grief, and ordered the bazars to be closed for eight days, as a sign of mourning. How is it possible to explain the contradictions and caprices of the human character?

The principal administration of public affairs, is in the hands of a prime minister, or vizir, who is termed Ittimad ud Dewlet (the confidence of government): his authority is much inferior to that of the grand vizir of the Ottoman empire, though he unites in his own person nearly all the

branches of the ministry; but his functions are merely civil, and he has not, like the latter, the supreme command of armies, nor the power of life and death over the king's subjects. It is Mira Muhammed Chefi, whom I have already mentioned, that fills this eminent post. Hadji Muhammed Hussein Khan, the son of a baccal, or dealer in fruit and groceries at Ispahan, the Beylerbey, or governor of this city, is the favourite of the king, and occupies the second place in the state, with the title of Emin ud Dewlet (the prop of government). He is reputed to be the wealthest subject in the empire. The origin of his immense fortune is stated in various ways: some assert that he found treasures; others, that he kept possession of a large property which was intrusted to him, the real proprietor having perished in the civil wars; and others, in short, declare, that when Aga Muhammed Khan pursued Loutf Ali Khan, the treasures of the latter were given up to pillage, and that Hadji Muhammed Hussein Khan and his father, bought many articles at very low prices.

The following anecdote of this personage has been communicated to me. About two years since the king ordered that a despatch should be sent to Ispahan, to procure three young women worthy of his bed, for the harem. Those supreme orders were executed, and Hussein had the audacity to raise his hand to those virgins, and uncover their bosoms. When they arrived at

Teheran, and were presented to the king, they said, that they could not hope to be acceptable to his highness, as a vile slave had presumed to touch them. This threw the sovereign into a great fury, and he ordered the criminal to be brought before him. Mirza Riza Kouli, the actual favourite, interceded, and informed Hussein of his danger, recommending him to appease the king's anger by presents, and to spare nothing, for his life was in jeopardy. Hussein arrived, brought money, presented jewels already seen and approved of by the king, and his presents were accepted; the cause of his appeal was soon forgotten, and the Chah granted him daily proofs of his confidence; at length Hussein Khan, forgetting what he owed to his benefactor, Mirza Riza Kouli, determined on his ruin, and concluded by supplanting him. He is now in high favour, and his wealth has accumulated to such an extent, that he has monopolized every thing at Ispahan, where scarcely any article is sold, except for his account.

A secretary general of state, and several under secretaries, one of whom has the department of the finances, compose the remainder of the present ministry. Lastly, a person named Ismael Bey Khidmet Bachi, or principal valet de chambre to the king, performs the functions of minister of war. All the inferior employments in the civil department are occupied by an infinity of mirzas or clerks, and in the military, by khans of an inferior class.

The title of mirza is as common in Persia, as that of effendi in Turkey. It is understood in two different senses, according as it is placed before or after the name of the personage who is honoured with it. In the first case, it belongs to the whole class of literary men and lawyers, and even to mere clerks or writers; in the second, it is reserved entirely for the chah zades, or sons of the king, and the princes of the royal family.

Excepting the vizirs, and those who hold the chief employments in the administration, or who are attached to the court by some office, the mirzas who merely owe this title to their profession of mollahs, literary characters, lawyers, or schoolmasters, enjoy no peculiar privilege. The greater part of them are very poor and extremely ignorant, and though they strut with so much pride from a title which indicates an illustrious origin,* it may nevertheless be said, that their whole nobility consists in their writing; for they owe it entirely to that science, which is limited to knowing how to read and write.

The title of khan† is more particularly attached

* Mirza is a corruption of emir zadé, which signifies a nobleman's son.

† The word khan denotes by itself a very elevated dignity; meaning power, and even sovereignty. It is found amongst almost all the nations of Asia. The Tartar mandarins are titled

to the chiefs of the warlike tribes, the great men of the state who follow the military career, and to the governors of cities and provinces. The policy of the king, which tends to deprive, by degrees, these personages of a part of their power and influence, induces him to lavish this distinction on men of all ranks; but the high military nobility, who esteem themselves as being much superior to the khans that receive this title from royal favour, are very much offended at what they term an abuse; they wish much to establish a line of demarcation completely distinct, betwixt themselves and the latter. The royal commands will triumph over their efforts, and common interest in the end will reconcile these two orders, were it only for the necessity they have for supporting each other. The title of khan is hereditary, and placed after the name of the person who is invested with it.*

Traders and citizens have the title of Aga, which signifies master: servants and inferiors

with it in China, and in many other countries, and all the Mussulman sovereigns, comprehending the Grand Signor, bear it in their diplomas.

* I suspect Mr. Morier is mistaken when he says, that in Persia the title of mirza may be borne in conjunction with that of khan; he quotes, for instance, Mirza Hussein Ali Khan. It appears to me, that in this case, as in all those of a similar nature, Mirza is merely a proper name. As such it is often in use amongst the Persians, and I have heard it given even to domestic servants.

also use it to each other before their masters or patrons.

The Persians give to all sovereigns, without distinction, the title of Hazret, which literally signifies Presence, and which we translate by Majesty or Highness. Thus, for instance, in speaking of their sovereign, they say, Hazreti Feth Ali Chah, his Highness King Feth Ali, &c. The Turks, on the contrary, give this title in the singular, and before the name, only to their prophets; as for example, Hazreti Muhammed: they put it in the plural after the name of the Grand Signor, and those of persons of high rank, as in Sultan Selim Hazretleri; Hussein Ali Effendi Hazretleri, &c. In Persia the title of Djenab, which we translate by Excellency, is given to vizirs and the chief nobility.

This digression on titles has appeared necessary to enable you in the sequel to estimate their importance, according as you meet them in the course of my letters, and I shall now return to the original subject.

The provinces are governed by chah zades, who have their peculiar ministers, and a court, arranged like that of the king, or by khans, who then take the title of Beylerbey, and may be compared in some respects to the pachas of Turkey, though their authority is more limited. The cities have valis, or distinct governors. These often abuse their authority, to enrich themselves at the expence of those whom

they govern, which is generally the case in countries where despotism holds the place of laws. The various degrees of power, from the beylerbey down to the kalentar and ket khouda, who commands in a village, are so many distinct tyrannies to which the people resign themselves to suffer patiently, in the dread of a still more miserable fate. But it is more especially in the exaction of the taxes, that absolute power and oppression are developed: all the weight is placed on the cultivator and artisan: merchants pay no tax to the state, excepting the custom-house duties, and the nobility a kind of tribute called pechkech, or presents.

The king annually receives the pechkech of the beylerbeys and the chah zades, when the latter, being grown up, receive from their father the government of a province. As princes, their presents ought to be proportioned to their dignity, and more considerable than those of other nobles. It is, perhaps, for this reason that he gives the preference of those employments to his sons; and if all of them were of an age to serve his policy, in this respect, the royal treasure would gain considerably by it.

Feth Ali Chah has forty-two male children:*

* The number of them has very much increased since 1808. Mir Dawoud Zedour, sent on a mission to France, in 1816, asserted that the number of Chah Zades amounted to above sixty, at his departure from Persia.

the number of his daughters amounts, it is said, to more than one hundred; but that can be known only to his women and eunuchs, as the most impenetrable mystery covers all that passes in the interior of the harem.

We have not seen all the sons of the king, because several of them inhabit provinces which he has placed under their command, and others are still too young to leave the seraglio. The following are the names of the oldest portion of them:

Muhammed Ali Khan, the senior of all those princes, may be about twenty-four years of age. He inhabits Kerman Chah, and governs Lourestan. He is said to be very enterprizing, brave, and but little disposed to cede his right of primogeniture to his brother Abbas Mirza. Muhammed Veli Mirza commands in Khorassan, and resides at Meckhed; he is nearly of the same age and disposition as the preceding. Abbas Mirza, younger by six months, the issue of a mother of the royal tribe of Kadjars, has been, for that reason, long designated by his father, as presumptive heir to the crown. He is governor of Azerbaidjan, and resides at Tauris. I have already made this prince known to you, and shall now merely add that he gives great hopes to Persia.

Hassan Ali Mirza, governor of Teheran, constantly inhabits the capital, especially when the king is absent from it. Hussein Ali Mirza, brother of the preceding, by his mother, is still very

young. He commands at Chiraz and throughout Farsistan. Muhammed Kouli Mirza governs Mazenderan, the native country of the reigning family. Ali Chah remains at Teheran, with the king; he is brother, by his mother, to Abbas Mirza, and the latter, by appointing him his Naib, or representative, has confided to him the care of his interests in this capital.

The other sons of Feth Ali Chah, still too young to fill any important post, are under the care of their mothers in the interior of the harem. Some of them, by a very singular custom, which, perhaps, is not to be found elsewhere, are adopted by the principal nobles of the kingdom. We have seen two of them in the house of the grand vizir Mirza Muhammed Chefi, one with the Nasakchi Bachi, Ferradj Oula Khan, chief of the tribe of the Efchars; one with Ismael Bey, principal valet de chambre of the king, and others with the principal personages of the capital. The king thus saves the expences of their education and maintenance; and the nobility, like true courtiers, take good care not to refuse an honour which must increase their credit at court.

The king has a nephew, named Muhammed Ibrahim Khan, who is also become his son-in-law, by marrying a sister of the governor of Khorassan. Though he is not a chah zade, he holds that rank by his marriage, and enjoys the particular affection of Feth Ali Chah, who has given him the government of Kerman.

The chah zades exact in their respective residences, the same honours as the king in the capital. Their ministers and all the persons attached to their courts, are subject to the same duties and obligations as to their sovereign. The daily functions of the courtiers are as follows: twice each day, in the morning about eleven o'clock, and in the evening at five, the vizirs and all the placemen are obliged to appear at the selam of the king. The selam or salutation is an audience at which the sovereign requires an exact account of all affairs of state from his ministers. None of them dare be absent from that assembly; which, besides, obtains for those who are not invested with important employments, easy and frequent occasions of showing themselves and paying their respects. The chah zades themselves are subjected to it when at Teheran. All are ranged standing and silent, according to their ages or dignities, and the king only is seated at the window of a room on the ground floor. I shall very soon give you a description of the ceremonial observed here on solemn festivals, such as the Bairams and Newrous, taking care not to describe any thing to you but what passes under my own immediate observation.

LETTER XIX.

Character of the Persians—their Manners—Munedjims or Astrologers—Physicians—Mussulman Casuists—Indifference of the Persians for the Fair Sex—their Uncleanliness—Employment of Time—Persian Cookery—Festivals—Solibets—Amusements—Exercise of the Djerid—Cock and Ram Fighting—Persian Sportsmen.

Teheran, Feb. 10, 1808.

The most important object of travels, and the greatest advantage which can be drawn from them, is to learn a knowledge of mankind, and thence be able to appreciate our species according to their just value. Obliged to rely upon himself, and judge of all from what he sees, the traveller is no longer the dupe of those deceitful accounts so frequently found in works of this kind; nor does he permit himself to be seduced by the brilliant exaggerations of national feeling, ever enthusiastic, and solicitous of the stranger's admiration. Perhaps he may lose some enjoyments by this, but he is sure at least to gain a great deal in point of instruction; and if unguarded declarations are often the reply of his adversaries, they ought not to make him renounce a task which he has voluntarily imposed on himself. Fully sensible of his duties as a narrator, and confiding in the support of those who have seen the countries,

or become acquainted with them from a long study of their history, the impartial observer will not be deterred from an elucidation of truth, by which he can alone hope to eradicate the errors and prejudices too easily imbibed by credulity.

You will, perhaps, comprehend that I intend to describe the character of the Persians to you. In making this attempt, I promise to perform it dispassionately, and with all the impartiality which the subject requires.

If a people were to be judged from first impressions or by appearances, the Persians would doubtless obtain the approbation of all: their politeness carried to excess, their civilities and attentions to a stranger would soon gain his good will, and if he had neglected to study their manners, or had only ordinary communications with them, he must return home very much prepossessed in their favour. Such was the opinion which we, ourselves, had first formed of the Persians. Without failing to render them all the justice they merit, or omitting the qualities which so eminently distinguish their neighbours, the Turks, I shall add, that they are witty and agreeable, that they are exempt from that barbarous fanaticism, which in some respects inspires us with a just aversion to the Ottomans; that in Persia, a Christian, Mussulman, Jew, and Guebre, enjoy at present almost equal protection on the part of the government; that all,

without distinction of faith, salute each other with selam alekim;* that there is no degrading distinction in the costume of the different sectaries, and that, in short, there are examples of Christians having received the titles of khan and mirza, and arriving even to public employments and dignities. But after having performed the part required by justice, it is fit also for truth to have her sway. It must be allowed, that under the most affable and seducing exterior, the Persians are deficient in candour and good faith: they are said to have a predilection for bombast, dissimulation, and lying. I see nothing French in these various qualities, or which can justify a comparison too lightly, or unjustly asserted. To return to lying, it might be almost supposed that this vice forms an essential part of their education. In the most serious affairs, as in the common transactions of life, they appear to have a decided antipathy to truth, and the foreigner who would have the simplicity to believe their assertions, or give credit to their protestations, would infallibly become the dupe of the most false and cunning of mankind. It is necessary, therefore, under the penalty of falling into contempt, never

* Selam Alekim in Arabic signifies health be on you. It is the ordinary formula of persons who meet or commence a conversation. The Persians salute in this manner, indiscriminately, men of all religions; the Turks, on the contrary, give this salutation to Mussulmen only.

to appear fully convinced by their discourse; and to preserve with them a decided air of incredulity and even of superiority, is the only means of eluding their deceit.

Let us, however, do them justice in another point: you would be displeased with me if I were to detail only their faults and defects. The Persians are full of wit and comprehension; they adopt with facility and without any scruple of conscience, the foreign customs which appear to be superior to their own; and were it not for the immense distance by which they are separated from Europe, they would be susceptible of rapid advances in civilization.

This good inclination will appear very singular in a people professing the Mahometan religion, and who are still far from having shaken off all their prejudices. But how much have they not yet to acquire in this latter respect! The very men who load us with politeness and attention, term us nedjis, or impure; and believe themselves polluted by eating out of the same dish with us. They avoid our touch, and by another species of superstition, they undertake no business, either with us, or amongst themselves, without having consulted their astrologers. You have seen by the account I have given you of our arrival at Teheran, the degree of confidence they grant to that class of men, of whom the king himself, no doubt, from respect to the general prejudices in their favour,

seems to honour with his approbation.* Their profession, however, is highly censured by the Mussulmen casuists, and condemned as in opposition to the precepts of the Koran, which teaches that destiny is immutable; and that all fortunate or disastrous events occur solely by the will of God. Custom, however, in this case, has an ascendency over religion. The Persians never undertake a journey, nor any enterprize, without consulting an astrologer, who examines the stars, and weighs with gravity all the chances of the enterprize, previous to deciding if the thing be practicable. These muneddjims, as they are termed, practice physic also; and you may judge what must be the fate of a patient in such hands. Astrology gives a great latitude to medicine, puts it at ease, and discharges it, as may be said, from all responsibility. If he knows nothing of the disease, as is generally the case, the celestial doctor declares that the chance is not favourable, and the unhappy victim of ignorance perishes without uttering a complaint.

I have not remarked any thing in the manners of the Persians which can justify the accusation of ferocity made against them formerly, by a few travellers. It is true they now enjoy peace

* I am inclined to believe that such a prince as Feth Ali Chah, gifted with all the qualities of the mind, and who is supposed to be one of the most learned men in his kingdom, maintains astrologers, and practices astrology himself, solely from motives which it is not difficult to comprehend. It is, perhaps, with him a political expedient rather than superstition.

and tranquillity, that their long revolutions are, I dare not say terminated, but at least stifled, and that the population, engaged as it is in domestic and agricultural labours, industry and commerce, is no longer the same as in civil wars. I judge of them, therefore, as I see them, and I would rather bear the imputation of too much indulgence, than of excessive severity. I have, besides, still other vices to reproach them with; the most serious is their injustice and indifference to a sex which elsewhere forms all the charm and happiness of our existence. Women are merely, in the estimation of these men, beings created solely for their pleasures. Preserved by their education and habits from the pains and vicissitudes of love; incapable, on the other hand, by their religious prejudices, of appreciating its delights and enjoyments, they have degraded that sentiment to the excess of reserving it at times for their minions, and of turning it into a crime against nature. Many of their poems turn entirely on this inconceivable degeneracy; and their moral depravity is such,* that far from making a mystery of this new species of amorous intrigue, they appear, on the contrary, to take pride in it; and speak publicly of their minions, as if they were speaking of their mistresses.

Enervated in early life by the heat of the climate, and by marriages contracted previous to the age in which man attains his full vigour, the rich and powerful Persians spend their lives between idleness, debauchery and effeminacy. Covered with vermin under their dresses of gold cloth, they might be, in some respects, compared to a nation less distant from us, and which has become celebrated for its indolence and filthiness. But, every thing in this world is in a state of contrariety: as much as they neglect the cleanliness of their persons, so much do they attach importance to that of their houses; their court-yards are kept nicely swept; their carpets and the felts that serve them as seats, carefully beaten, and they never enter an apartment without leaving their slippers at the door!

* The fifth Bab, or book of the Gulistan of Saadi, entitled, Der Echk u Djivani (on love and youth), is partly appropriated to this subject.

The Persian rises at day-break, and first recites his morning prayer, generally aloud; then, if a nobleman or public functionary, he leaves his harem and goes into the first court of his house, where he gives audience, during an hour, to his vassals and dependents. At eleven o'clock his breakfast is served up, and consists of bread, cheese, raw herbs or fruits, all on a tray of tinned copper. He afterwards washes his hands and beard, takes a cup of coffee, smokes a kalioun, and goes to the selam of the king. If he be a trader, or one who has no public business to transact, he goes to the bazars to attend to his profession, or remains unoccupied at home. At noon he says his second prayer, and at two o'clock, especially in summer, he shuts himself up and sleeps until four or five.

At sun-set he performs his third ablution and last prayer, and places himself at table to dine. This latter meal is composed of meats cooked in various ways, vegetables and fruits: the solid or principal dish is always the pilaw, which he eats without bread.

The Persian cookery is in general very plain, and may be done at a trifling expense; in many respects it resembles that of the Turks; in others it differs from it: like the latter, the Persians all eat out of the same dish, and never use knives and forks. They take up every thing with their fingers, even the pilaw, kneading with their right hand a bit from each dish, which they make into a ball of the size of a walnut, and throw it with great dexterity into the mouth. They drink iced liquids in summer, as in winter, and are great lovers of sweetmeats and preserves. The confectionary department is what they manage best. Their formal entertainments commence with all that is most exquisite in the above line, and they mix without distinction, the highest flavoured and spiced viands with the richest sweetmeats. The great officers of state, and all the personages of the court, have displayed their magnificence in the dinners which they have given in rotation to the ambassador, since his arrival at Teheran. A description of them would interest you but little, and I have thought it best to avoid troubling you with it, as you would merely find a repetition of the same circumstances. I shall merely inform you, that as much from respect to our customs, as to have a pretence for not touching dishes polluted by impure hands, we every where found tables laid out in the French manner, covered with rich silk stuffs embroidered with gold and silver, instead of table cloths. The general sent his plate beforehand, and we were served in the European style, whilst the Persians, squatted on their carpets opposite to us, gave themselves up, according to their own taste, to all the pleasures of good living.

The traders and persons of the lower classes lead, from necessity, rather a less indolent life; though nothing but the obligation of labour prevents them from indulging in repose like the others; going early to the places appropriated to commerce, they shut up their shops to sleep during the great heat of the day, and open them afterwards until nine or ten at night, when they return to their houses. From two to five o'clock, very few persons are to be seen in the city, at which period the same silence reigns there as in the night. The evenings are devoted, amongst the opulent, to solibets or assemblies, which sometimes continue until midnight, or even later. It is needless to say that ladies are not admitted to these parties, where they smoke, take coffee, tea, and tcherbet; the conversation sometimes grave, at others light and witty, turns alternately on religion, poetry, and literature; nor is it divested of interest even for foreigners, when limited to the two last named subjects.

In the number of their pleasures and amusements must also be reckoned sumptuous suppers, enlivened by the performances of musicians and dancers. On those occasions it often happens that the Persians deviate from their usual temperance and frugality, especially when they indulge in wine and spirituous liquors: they are passionately fond of the latter, which is supplied to them from Russia, and we have seen them commit frightful excesses while under its influence. Being a bad spirit distilled from grain, worthy only of pleasing the palate of a Cossack, they are surprised to find that we do not participate in their taste, and they cannot avoid laughing when they see us putting water in our wine.

The Persians are very fond of riding, also of the djerid, cock and ram fighting, and above all, hunting. They follow it in various manners, with birds of prey, or dogs; but they never dare to eat of any game bitten by one of those animals: thus the above amusement, already barbarous in itself, becomes still more so amongst them, since it has no object of utility in view.

The Persian huntsmen are armed with a very long gun, of a large calibre: a parcel of cord rolled above the stock, serves them for a guard: when they want to fire, they are obliged to strike fire with flint and steel, to light a match: nevertheless, in spite of the imperfection of their fire arms, they must be acknowledged to be very expert marksmen; as they often shoot birds flying, and seldom miss their aim.

LETTER XX.

Nighiaristan.—Palace of Kasri Kadjar.—Harem of the King.—Ruins of Rhages.—Rey.—Sacred Village of Chah Abdul Azim.—Religion of the Persians.—Funerals.—Cemeteries.—Mosques.—Toleration.—Intolerance of the Mollahs.—Dervishes.—Emirs.—Public Schools.

Teheran, Feb. 24, 1808.

We have made several excursions in the environs of this capital; I am going briefly to recount what they presented most worthy of notice, and shall then pass on to other objects.

Our first ride was directed towards Nighiaristan, a small pleasure house belonging to the Chah Zade Abbas Mirza, and built for that prince by his grand vizir Mirza Buzurk. This country-house, which contains nothing very extraordinary, is about a mile from Teheran. It is surrounded by a mud wall, flanked on the eastern side with a small tower, where there is a long culverine of brass. Mounted on a clumsy carriage, this appears to be rather an object of ostentation than of defence.

Nighiaristan has the double signification of a place from which there is a prospect, or where an observatory is established. It is, no doubt,

the tower of which I speak, that has caused this name to be given to it. There is, in fact, from its summit a view of all the city, and surrounding country, and nothing is deficient in this extensive view, but to be more agreeable and varied: for, on all sides there is nothing to be seen save an uncultivated plain, of great sterility.

The apartments of the Nighiaristan are not spacious, and present none of that Asiatic splendor we expected to have found there; their extreme simplicity indicates the taste of the prince who is proprietor of them.

The garden, about six hundred paces long, by three hundred broad, is kept in good order: it is in the shape of a long square, ornamented with flowers, and planted with poplars, still very young. A small canal about three feet wide, the bed of which is entirely covered with beautiful stones, divides it in its whole length: the water which supplies it is excellent, and proceeds from a source, of which we could not reach the bottom by sounding. It issues with impetuosity, and cools a marble pavilion where there is a bason and fountain. The same canal carries its waters to a fountain at a short distance from the city, the reservoir of which the king has retained to himself. I believe I have already told you, that by a special favour, his majesty had placed this fountain at the disposition of the embassy.

Beyond the Nighiaristan, at a parasang (a distance of four miles) to the north of Teheran, is

the royal castle of Kasri Kadjar, which we visited afterwards. It is built like an amphitheatre, on a rock, and at the foot of the mountains bounding the plain on that side.

This building, the elevation of which causes it to be seen at a great distance, is formed of brick, covered with white stucco. The principal gate is of brass. To give you a better idea of the interior, permit me, as it were, to introduce you into it with me.

Two long dark galleries are first passed through, and after leaving the bathing rooms, which are all lined with marble, on the left we enter into a spacious court shaded with beautiful plane trees. This is the harem, or apartment of the women. Their absence having permitted us to satisfy our curiosity, we inspected a place, inaccessible to other mortals, except the king and his eunuchs: under any other circumstances, we should have paid dearly for our temerity. The ladies, during the night, are separated into sets of five, under the care of one of those formidable argusses; but in the day time they may associate together in the court, and take the pleasure of bathing in a vast bason, which divides it into two equal parts. To this are reduced nearly all the enjoyments of those who are not invited to the honour of sharing the royal bed. I doubt whether their fate will appear enviable to our countrywomen; but they are accustomed to it from an early age, and were it not for the jealousy or little intrigues which must often agitate them, and the efforts they are constantly

making to supplant more beautiful or expert rivals, perhaps they would find themselves happy. I do not, however, take upon myself to decide this question, and therefore leave it to your better judgment.

The apartments of the king's women are destitute of that magnificence, which exists only in the imaginations of our romance writers. They are small square cells, at the end of which are raised alcoves of wood, covered with mattrasses; all the furniture corresponds exactly with the simplicity of the place. At the extremity of the court there are two large saloons richly painted in fresco, and decorated with portraits of several Persian kings and heroes.

We next enter the sanctuary where the happy mortals to whom the king of kings deigns to grant his sublime attention are admitted; in that temple where beauty often triumphs over power:* I allude to the king's bed-chamber. It is ascended by a small stair-case of twelve or fifteen steps, and must be visited to form an idea of that Asiatic luxury, which a review of the preceding objects would induce you to suppose had no existence. Let not your imagination, however, induce you to fancy you behold ceilings and cornices shining in pearls

* As I may here be accused of contradicting myself, after what I said in the nineteenth letter, on the little regard the Persians have for the fair sex, I am very happy in having this opportunity of declaring that Feth Ali Chah is free from the general accusation against that nation. It is even said, that he is passionately fond of women, and that he holds the infamous vice I have mentioned in detestation.

and diamonds: as it would then carry you beyond the truth. The fact is, that this apartment, having several windows which open on the court of the harem, and on the gardens, is inlaid with mirrors, and ornamented with four portraits of females in the Persian style. The ceiling and other parts of the room are remarkable for some most delicately executed paintings in fresco; but the freshness of the colouring excels the purity of the design. Lastly, two magnificent doors of inlaid cabinet work, are what principally attract the attention; they would not be misplaced in our most beautiful palaces: the workmanship is admirable, and appeared to us far superior to all that we had hitherto seen in Persia. Ivory, ebony, mother-of-pearl, and many precious woods are mingled with so much art, that the whole presents an appearance of the most perfect workmanship and unity. I confess that I could not have imagined the Persians capable of producing such a master-piece.

We were assured that the king, when he went to Kasri Kadjar, often placed himself at the windows of this pavilion, and, like David of old, ordered the women to bathe themselves in his presence in a large basin of the harem, and that this spectacle seemed greatly to divert his majesty!*

Beneath the castle, on the opposite side from the harem, is a beautiful terrace divided by a canal,

* What an enviable treat to certain princes of Europe!

which falls in cascades under an arch, down to the gardens. There is a descent by a covered staircase, very steep, to a second and third terrace, when we reach a beautiful kiosk, the interior of which is ornamented with paintings and portraits. Here we took our station for an hour, and placed ourselves at table to partake of a breakfast prepared for us by order of the king.

From the windows of this spot are seen all the plain of Teheran, the gardens of Kasri Kadjar, and still nearer a large sheet of water, on which the king often sails in a boat with his favourites.

After breakfast we left the kiosk, when another staircase let us into the gardens: these are not of great extent, though very well managed; there is a considerable number of fruit trees and some cypresses planted in them. A canal, formed by the water of the cascades which fall from the upper terraces, passes through their whole length, and runs behind through a marble chamber, in the same way as that of Nighiaristan, but larger. Lastly, the palace and all its dependencies are surrounded with mud walls, flanked by many towers, and is entered at four different gates, all of them covered with pavilions.

At a league and a half south of Teheran, and on the road to Ispahan, we visited the ruins of the city of Rhages, on which is raised a miserable village called Rey. It appears now sufficiently demonstrated, that there has been an error on the part of those geographers and travellers, who

supposed they had found them more to the southward of Teheran, and near Koum or Sava. An inspection of the spot, and the name of the village, which reminds us of that of the ancient city, would, perhaps, suffice to fix the opinion of the learned, in this point.*

If the Orientals were to be believed, Rhages, at the time of the conquest of Persia by Alexander, was twenty leagues in circumference, and contained several millions of inhabitants. To judge of it by more rational accounts, and the space covered by its ruins, scattered here and there at great distances, this city must certainly have been very large, but it is necessary to be guarded against the exaggeration of the Persians, relative to the extent and ancient population which they attribute to it.

With the exception of some brick walls, that probably belonged to a citadel, and which are seen on a little hill on the eastern side, there remains no vestige of any monument. The foundations

* Olivier places the ruins of Rey or Rai at a league to the eastward of Pouli Tela, about twenty-four hours march to the southward of Teheran, and four north of Koum. On the other hand, Chardin supposes them to be nine leagues to the east of Sava; which would place them eastward of Pouli Tela. Lastly, Strabo, quoted by Olivier, and who calls this city Regeia, says, that it was five hundred stadii, or about ten leagues south of the Caspian gates. The opinion of more modern travellers approaches still nearer the latter; but, according to the calculation of the ancient geographer, it would still be fifteen leagues further north of the ruins we have seen.

of a great number of houses, excavations filled with bricks and broken earthenware, are now the only objects that indicate its inclosure and situation.*

Amongst the ruins of less remote times, which we saw at Rhages, there is a brick tower, well built, and about sixty feet in height. This monument seems to belong to the dynasty of the Seldjeucidan kings. It is of a round form, and supported by twenty-four triangular ribs; the solidity of which appears likely to ensure it a long existence. An inscription in Cuphic characters runs round the cornice.

The village of Rey is quite close to this tower, on the border of a pond abounding in fish, which are exclusively appropriated to the king's use.

At a quarter of league further, we reached the town of Chah Abdul Azim: it is a holy place, where the king and his court often go to perform pilgrimages to the tomb of an Imam Zadé. This monument is in the midst of a garden, and near a mosque surrounded with several domes. A great number of beggars posted on the road, wait for the passage of the pilgrims, and invoke their generosity in the name of the saint.

Chah Abdul Azim is one of the most considerable towns in the environs of Teheran. It con-

* Rhages was the native country of Haroun el Raschid, and one of the residences of that Caliph. In the tenth century it gave birth to Rhases, a celebrated Arabian physician. It was during the ninth century, one of the most wealthy, extensive, and populous cities in Persia, and in the twelfth, it was destroyed by the Mussulman Tartars.

tains a great many mollahs or Persian priests. This place, devoted to religion, is, it may be said, their domain, and they are at home there; for though the will of the sovereign frequently sets aside the precepts of the koran, in points of justice and government, yet with the exception of these two cases, the religious dogmas have not less preserved their empire, and the Persians are so attached to the practices of their old superstitions, that the long revolutions and violence of Thamas Kouli Khan to lead them to the belief of the sunnis, have only increased the attachment to their own faith.

You know that the modern Persians are Mussulmen, but they call themselves chiias, that is to say, that Ali, the son-in-law of Mahomet, is, in their opinion, the only and legitimate successor of the prophet; whilst the Turks, who are sunnis, revere in that quality Aboubekr, Omar, and Osman, placing Ali only in the fourth rank. It is from this dissention that the hatred proceeds which the two nations have mutually vowed against each other. But ought we to be astonished, when we recollect that during so long a time, fanaticism deluged all Europe in blood and carnage, from causes nearly similar? On reading our history attentively, I do not think that we can, in this respect, seriously reproach the Turks and Persians. Fortunately those times are passed, and become more distant every day: we are now a little wiser, let us hope that they also will be-

come so in their turn, and cease, at some future period, to deserve the epithet of barbarians, which *we think* ourselves still justified in applying to them.

The Persians accompany their devotions with some exterior ceremonies which are not in use amongst the Turks. At certain periods they make pompous processions, and in general celebrate their religious festivals with all the splendor that can render them imposing. I shall very soon describe one of the most remarkable. Their funerals are also performed with more parade than those of the Turks. As soon as a person of distinction has yielded his last breath, the mosque of his parish and also his own house are hung with black; while public mourners posted on the terrace of his residence, commence long groanings, and sing his praises until he is carried to the grave. The body of the deceased, after having been washed according to the Mussulman custom, is placed on a bier, preceded by several mollahs, who carry black banners.

The princes and nobles are usually interred in the plain of Kerbela, close to the tomb of Ali, which is near Bagdad, and consequently out of the Persian territory. Others are buried in the cemeteries in the neighbourhood of towns or villages, and are even sometimes found within their inclosures. These burial grounds do not resemble those of the Turks: they are not as at Constantinople, vast and majestic forests of cypresses,

strewed with rich mausoleums of marble, where gold and inscriptions have been lavished. The ashes of the sectaries of Ali repose in grounds appropriated to them near the mosques, or on the borders of the high road. Their tombs are in the most simple style: pebbles symmetrically arranged flat on the earth, sometimes a small square of marble with a short inscription, and a representation of the instruments of the profession of the deceased, or even a small triangular stone raised a few inches, are their only ornaments. There are to be seen, however, outside of Teheran, other monuments surmounted with a small dome of clay, resting on four brick pillars. That of our countryman, Romieu, who died at Teheran, in the course of last year, is built on this model; it is within the very precincts of the city, and near the gate which leads to the Ispahan road.

In Persia they no longer build those beautiful mosques which were such objects of admiration to Chardin and his contemporaries. Those which have escaped the ravages of time and revolutions, now alone merit the stranger's attention; their cupolas, incrusted with tiles of various colours, reflect the rays of the sun in a thousand ways, and may give an idea of those porcelain towers which are said to exist in China. The minarets are also remarkable for their elegance: their form is not the same as in Turkey; they resemble more the triumphal columns of the Romans, which are crowned with a gallery. The

mosques of Saltanié, of which I have already spoken, are the most beautiful monuments of this kind existing in Persia; those of Ispahan, Tauris, and other large cities of the kingdom, have nothing that approaches their magnificence. The modern Persians, however, neglect those antique edifices, and suffer works which were the glory of their greatest kings, to fall in ruins. Disheartened by national calamities, they no longer build for posterity, and seem to think only of the present moment. The modern mosques, destitute of minarets, have nothing to distinguish them externally from common houses. Figure to yourself a small hall covered with mats, serving as a refuge to the vagabonds and beggars of the neighbourhood, who go there to sleep and eat their meals, and you will have an idea of a Persian temple. I attribute this sufferance to the habit which the rich Persians have latterly contracted, of no longer frequenting the mosques. It would appear that their religion does not enjoin it as a strict obligation, for neither the king nor the great nobility ever appear there: they say their prayers at home, in their own private chapel, thus abandoning public temples to the common people.

The mollahs of Persia like the imans in Turkey, are doctors of laws, and each interprets in his own way, which gives rise to many schisms. This class of men is in fact the only one that has appeared to me inclined to fanaticism and intolerance; never have we received, even from

the lower orders, epithets insulting to our religion; the mollahs alone have taken that liberty. The hypocritical and devout air which they take care to assume in public, the affectation with which they constantly recite their prayers in walking, no more deceive the Persians themselves than their imprecations, in an under tone, intimidated us. They do not seem, in general, to enjoy much respect. Their chief, who, under the name of Sadr, was once invested with extensive influence and power, is now called Mollah Bachi, or Cheik ul Islem: he does not maintain a very elevated rank at court, and is far from having the same degree of influence as the Muphti at Constantinople.

The mollahs are distinguished from other Persians by the form of their kaba, a kind of robe which crosses on the breast, and by a turban which they twist round their heads in a manner peculiar to themselves. They give exhortations to the people in the mosques and public squares, nearly in the same manner as the Italian preachers, and they introduce into their sermons and discourses all the gravity and emphasis deemed necessary to make them impressive. An Indian philosopher has said, with reason, that gravity was only the bark of wisdom. The application of this maxim would agree perfectly, in my opinion, with the ministers of Islamism; who are accused of being more severe to others than to themselves. It is said, that they readily

enter into profligate habits; and this is not surprising, when it is known what a latitude the religion of Mahomet gives them in this respect. They have, however, the liberty of marrying; but you know that amongst the Mussulmen, marriage does not impose the same obligations as with us; it is a contract revocable at will, susceptible of every favourable interpretation for the most powerful party, and which, in reality, only enchains the weaker.

The derviches are not found in cloisters in Persia, as in Turkey: those who are sometimes met in the towns and country, are fakirs, natives of India or the southern provinces of the kingdom, who live wholly on the alms of the people and nobility. It would be difficult to depict the whimsicality of their costume: armed with a halberd and laden with amulets, they dabble in medicine and astrology, performing their operations, predictions, and slight of hand in the public squares. Some of them wear the green turban, because they call themselves emirs, or descendants of Mahomet. Though generally despised, yet it is not rare to find in this class, men who are very learned in the Oriental languages.

I have told you elsewhere that the Persians often make religion the subject of their discourse. They are very fond of controversy, and incite us to it as much as possible. Their wish is to convert us, but only by persuasion; for they can-

not be accused of any rancour or bitterness in conversations of this kind. One point, which essentially distinguishes them from the Turks is, that they may be told freely and boldly what is thought of their dogmas, without offending them.* It often happens too, that Christians who had become Mussulmen in consequence of unfortunate circumstances, had returned to their former religion, without having been molested. I leave you to judge, therefore, which of these two nations is the most sociable and tolerant.

It is to be regretted, that with such good natural propensities, and those talents so easily recognized in them, the Persians should be still so backward in respect to useful knowledge: gifted with a keen and penetrating wit, anxious to instruct themselves, they require only to be illuminated with the lights of philosophy, to rival Europe in the arts and sciences.

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* Many persons consider the Turks as a tolerant people, because they permit Christians and different sectaries scattered throughout their empire, a more or less free exercise of their religion. That is, however, a singular toleration which can only be obtained by its weight in gold, and which authorizes the strongest to load with injuries and outrages, those who do not believe like himself; which excludes the rayas from all public honours and employments; which subjects them alone, to the arbitrary tax of the kharatch, depriving them of all appeal against the violence of their oppressors, and punishing with death the unfortunate person detected in criminal intercourse with a Mahometan woman. I confess that I cannot decide on esteeming such a nation as tolerant!

Public instruction is in the hands of the mollahs, and the colleges are placed in the vicinity of the mosques: the children are taught to read and write, and are also familiarized with the works of the most celebrated poets. These establishments are not numerous, while their appearance may be compared to that of our meanest village schools. A very emphatic pedant maintains some discipline, and does not prevent the scholars from venting all kinds of ill-treatment on the passengers. If his dignity did not oppose it, he would readily join them himself, especially when curiosity leads a Frank to look in at the window.

Learning is more rare in Persia, at present, than in the two last centuries. Poetry, for which this nation has had a decided taste, is still much cultivated, but it is on the decline. Writing, which here forms an essential part of science, is also less beautiful than formerly, and it is very difficult to procure, even at high prices, the worst specimens of those fine manuscripts so much sought for by orientalists. Nearly all of them were carried off during the revolutions, and have been taken into Turkey, or purchased for our great public libraries; so that they can be bought on cheaper terms at Constantinople than in Persia.

LETTER XXI.

Ramazan.—Bairam and Courban Bairam, Sacrifice of the Camel.—Tazies, Religious Festivals in commemoration of the Martyrdom of the Imans, Hassan and Hussein.

Teheran, March 10th, 1808.

The Ramazan, or fast of the Mussulmen, is observed with more exactness and rigour by the Persians than amongst the Turks. You, perhaps, know that during the whole of this moon, the ninth of the Arabian kalendar, the sectaries of Mahomet abstain from drinking, or eating, and even from smoking or taking snuff, between sunrise and sunsetting. I should add that they amply recompence themselves, during the night, for such a severe abstinence. The Turks, however, when on a journey, or if they are deprived of the necessary strength, by indisposition, to obey the law, infringe it, for the time being, on the obligation to fast afterwards, in the course of the year, an equal number of days to those of the ramazan. It is not thus with the Persians: more strict than the Sunnis, no motive can induce them to violate this precept, of which we had many instances when travelling with them.

The bairam puts an end to this austere fast:

it lasts only one day amongst the Chiias, and presents nothing remarkable; but the courban bairam, or festival of sacrifices, which occurs seventy-two days after the first, is celebrated with much more solemnity. The Chah Zade, governor of Teheran, departs in great state from the gates of the city, and goes to immolate, with his own hand, a camel richly caparisoned. The king's portion, and that for the royal family, are first reserved; the rest is distributed amongst the principal personages and officers of the court. This sacrifice is performed in commemoration of that of Abraham, and it was formerly the custom for the king himself to strike the first blow at the victim. All the inhabitants imitate the example of the prince, by sacrificing on their part, lambs; of which each reserve a portion for the poor. They dress themselves in new clothes, embrace each other in the streets, mutually wishing a happy festival, and there is a grand selam at the royal palace. This feast, which also lasts but one day, takes place the day after the courban bairam of the Turks.

But the most curious and extraordinary of all those we have hitherto seen, is the Tazies, or desolations, a kind of funeral games, instituted in memory of the martyrdom of the Imans, Hassan and Hussein, sons of Ali. It is very difficult to give an exact description of such a spectacle, even after having seen it; I shall, however,

attempt to give you an idea of the scene. We were invited by the king to be present at their celebration, and being placed conveniently in the shade of a tent raised on one of the terraces of the palace, it enabled us to enjoy a good sight of the whole at one view.

According to the Persians, Hassan and Hussein were the second and third Imans, or successors of Mahomet, after their father. Both of them perished at Kerbela, in a great battle against the false caliph Yezid, defending the law and the legitimate succession of the prophet. They are considered as martyrs, and in that quality highly venerated by the Chiias, who look upon Yezid as an usurper. The object of the Tazies is to remind the people of these memorable events, and to preserve their hatred and resentment against the Sunnis. The festival commences on the first of Mouharrem, and lasts until the 11th of the same month.

During those days of mourning, all the mosques are hung in black, the public squares and cross-ways are covered with large awnings, and at regular distances are placed stands, ornamented with vases of flowers, small bells, and arms of every kind. The Mollahs stationed in pulpits sing in a mournful voice sacred hymns and lamentations, and the whole auditory respond to them with tears and deep sighs. Men almost naked run through the city, striking their breasts rapidly; others piercing their arms and legs with knives,

fastening padlocks in the flesh under their breasts, or making wide gashes in their heads, invoke their saints with frightful howlings, shouting out Hassan! Hussein!

It is in the great court of the king's palace that the five last representations take place. They might be, in some respects, compared to those ancient spectacles, in which the miseries of the passion were acted. The vizirs pay the expences of the first day, and the city of Teheran, which is divided into four districts, pays those of the remaining four.

On a theatre erected opposite the king's kiosk, is to be seen the family of Hussein, represented by men in women's dresses. They are in great agitation, seem to have a foreboding of the dismal fate which that Iman must experience in the plain of Kerbela, and make the air resound with shrieks and dreadful groans. Horsemen soon arrive, load them with chains and carry them off. The two armies of the Iman Hussein and the caliph Yezid then appear in the square: the battle commences; Hussein soon falls from his horse covered with wounds, and Yezid orders his head to be cut off. At that moment the sobbings and lamentations of all the assembly are redoubled; the spectators strike their breasts, and tears stream from every eye!

On the following days, the representation of this tragedy is continued; Yezid successively detroys Hassan and the two children of Hussein,

who had fallen into his power, and a general procession terminates the fifth day.

The march was opened by a crowd of men of the lower orders, carrying flags surmounted with a hand of steel, and banners of Cachemire shawls, the richness of which formed a singular contrast with the poverty of their own dresses. Then came led horses magnificently caparisoned, their trappings shining with gold and jewels; litters ornamented with foliage and verdure; figures of dead bodies covered with blood, and pierced with daggers, round which aquatic birds moved. Naked and bleeding men marched behind; some of them had a large scimetar stuck into a false skull half open, fitted on their heads, or arrows which seemed to pierce through their breasts. They were followed by a long train of camels mounted by men dressed in black, as were the female mourners, and an infinity of persons of that sort, who threw ashes and chopped straw on their heads in token of mourning.

A more pompous and imposing spectacle suddenly came to variegate these hideous scenes. There appeared two great mosques of gilt wood, carried by more than three hundred men: both were inlaid with mirrors, and surmounted with little minarets: children placed in the galleries sang sacred hymns, the soft harmony of which agreeably recompensed the spectators for the frightful shoutings they had heard just before. Several Mollahs, magnificently dressed, prayed in the

interior, at the tomb of the two Imans. The representation of the Kaaba, or house of Abraham, at Mecca, appeared immediately after the two mosques, and was not inferior to them in richness of ornament. It was followed by Hussein's war horse, pierced all over with arrows, and led at large by his faithful slave, naked and armed with a battle-axe. A great number of children with wings of painted pasteboard, figured as angels or genii, marched in the rear.

The procession was closed by two or three hundred of the common people in tatters, who struck their breasts, and drove two round pieces of wood with violence against each other, crying "Hassan, Hossein! Ali!" lastly, by Mollahs, each carrying a large torch of yellow wax in a candlestick. The latter stopped a moment under the windows of the kiosk, where the king was; and the Cheik ul Islam addressed, according to custom, praises to his majesty.

We did not receive an invitation for the last day of the festival: the king wishing to spare the legation from witnessing the assassination of a Greek ambassador, who Yezid caused to be put to death, for having interceded with him for the pardon of Hussein's brother. The Persians, from what motive I know not, produce this ambassador in the modern European dress.

All these ceremonies are also repeated in the houses of the nobility. I give you only an imperfect idea of them, for it would be impossible for

me to recollect the numerous peculiarities of the representation: yet I can assure you of the exactness of those I have related. We are not the first travellers who have witnessed them. As extraordinary as such spectacles may at first seem, they will cease to be surprising when you recollect that in France, the festival of the ass and that of fools, were once celebrated.

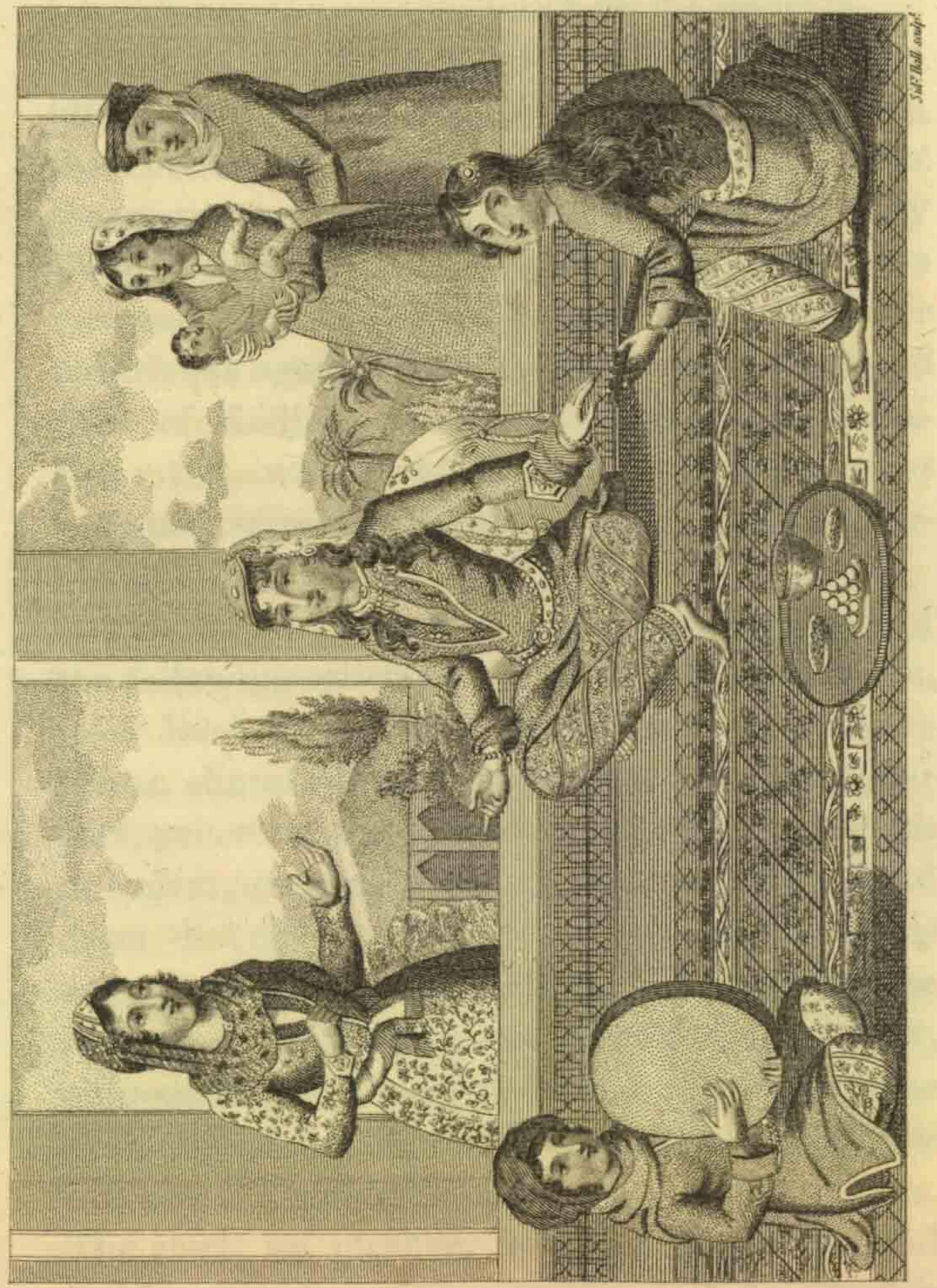
Unfortunate would be that Turk, or any other Sunni, who was discovered in the city during these days of delirium! He would be massacred without mercy, by a populace then influenced with a fanaticism happily but temporary. Imprecations against Omar and his sectaries are in every mouth; and the natural mildness of the Persian character would perhaps end in ferocity, if these dreadful spectacles were prolonged.

LETTER XXII.

Figure and Physiognomy of the Persians.—Their Costume.—Baths.—Persian Women.—Their Dress.—Amusement in the Harems.—Music and Dancing.—State of the Arts in Persia.

Teheran, March 18th, 1808.

You may have probably seen those who composed the embassy from the king of Persia, in Paris: if so, they will have given you an idea of the physical character and costume of this nation. The Persians are, in general, of a middle size; their complexion is olive, their eyes large and animated; their beard and hair of a beautiful black; these are stained of a reddish colour, when age begins to whiten them, or if they are naturally of a fair hue, which is however rarely the case. They shave their heads completely, with the exception of the young people, who leave two tufts behind their ears, this they twist into curls. They all wear beards, attaching great importance to that appendage, considering it as the greatest ornament of man. Differing in many respects from the Turks their neighbours, who cut the beard in the shape of a fan, they allow theirs to grow in its natural form, and the longer it is, the more



Interior of a Harem.

London, Published by W. Wright, 46 Fleet Street, Feby 7th 1820.

beautiful. In this particular, Feth Ali Chah is perhaps the best furnished man in his kingdom; his beard being the admiration of all his subjects.

Though like all the oriental nations, they are but little subject to the changeable caprices of fashion, the Persians of the present day have no longer the same costume as when they were visited by Chardin and Tavernier; and if those travellers returned now they would be unable to know their old friends again. The Tartar dress of the royal tribe of Kadjars has become that of all the nation: this, without being so rich as the ancient costume, is certainly more elegant and convenient.

The dress of Persia is generally composed of the following articles; a cap of black lambskin, from Bucharia or Astracan: the Persians give this an almost conical form by flattening the upper part, generally terminated by a point of red cloth or velvet, or simply of white skin. This head dress is called Burk, or Koulah, and is common to all classes, from the king to the peasant. The nobility and officers of state wear, on occasions of ceremony only, a cap of the same skin, the wool of which is shorter, round this is bound a Cachemire shawl of a palm pattern. The shirt, or pirahen, is of linen, cotton, red or blue silk; being open on the right breast, it is fastened at the same side, on the shoulder, with two or three small buttons, and descends only to the waist.

The pantaloons, or zir-djamé, are nearly of the same shape as the trowsers of our sailors, and made of blue cotton cloth, or red silk, according to the quality of the person; they are bound on above the girdle, by means of a string running round the top of them. The alcalouk, is a kind of tunic of calico wadded with cotton, and open on the breast. It descends only to the knee. The kaba, is a robe of gold, silk or cotton stuff, likewise open on the breast, and ornamented before with two pieces of gold or silver lace, and buttons of the same metal: this falls as low as the ancle. Next comes the shawl or girdle, which is worn over the kaba. The king and the chah zades alone enjoy the privilege of wearing Cachemire shawls as girdles: those of the nobility are of gold cloth. Lastly, a small pelisse or poustin, which does not go below the waist.

The khans and mirzas are dressed, on occasions of ceremony, each in a long pelisse of gold cloth, with lace and large buttons of the same metal. At all other times they wear a wide capote of red cloth, which is called bala pouch, the cape of it being quilted and embroidered with silk of the same colour, garnished with large silk covered buttons, and falling as low as the waist. On a journey, or when with the army, they replace the bala pouch by the tikmé, a Tartar coat of green cloth, fitted close to the shape, with sleeves open to above the wrist, at which part they become narrower.

The tikmé is also worn by the common people.

The undress consists of a little pelisse covered with cloth or silk stuff, embroidered with gold or silver, and which has the same form as the tikmé. It is not uncommon to see the greatest noblemen, especially in winter, dressed in a simple pelisse of sheepskin, similar to that of the shepherds.

Cotton or woollen socks, djourab, or stockings of red cloth are also worn. The first are of various colours, and an attempt is made to imitate, in their patterns, those of the striped Cachemire shawls, to these are added, slippers of green morocco leather, with high heels, for wearing in town: on journies, or for military expeditions, they wear long boots of brown leather, which rise above the knee.

Military men have always a kandjar, or large poignard in their girdles, the hilt of which is of enamelled gold, or ivory: they also carry a scimetar at their side which is called chomchir. The lawyers, literary men, and all those who belong to the civil departments, have a simple roll of paper instead of arms.

The Persians reserve their luxury and magnificence entirely for those parts of their dress which are exposed, for they attach no importance to such as are not visible. Thus it is that their clothes of gold cloth, or silk, are lined with the coarsest linen; in fact, they place no value on the fineness of that article: great filthiness is the inevitable

result of this negligence. The rich as well as the poor are devoured with vermin; they wear the same shirt day and night during whole months, putting it on again when coming out of the bath, and never changing until it quits them by falling into rags.

During summer, the Persian ladies, in the interior of their houses, wear no more clothes than a light shift of linen or silk, and large pantaloons of gold cloth or Cachemire stuff, wadded with cotton. If, as some assert, the jealousy of the Chinese caused them to invent for their women shoes so tight, that they at length deprive them of the faculty of walking, perhaps the Persian females owe the form and thickness of this part of their dress to the same principle. Their legs and a part of their bodies, imprisoned in those two heavy columns, contrived so as to embarrass all their movements, must necessarily be unfit for long walks. Still more restricted than the Turkish women, who freely traverse the streets, half veiled, they never go out but on very rare occasions, and merely to visit their relations and friends. They then wear four thick veils, and are covered from head to foot with a long piece of white linen, having some small openings opposite the eyes; their faces, nay, their very hands, are invisible. A rich woman never goes out without a kind of train; she is always mounted on a horse or mule, the bridle of which is held by an eunuch or slave.

Old women of the lower orders, covered with a blue check cloth, are the only females who are seen walking in the streets of the city.

The Persian ladies are very particular in their dress, when they have to receive the visits of their friends; and in this point their coquetry does not yield, in its way, to that of the European fair: it cannot, however, have the same object, that of pleasing, as from being limited solely to the view of their husbands, they are inaccessible to the sight of all other men. Self-love, and the vanity of desiring to shine in the presence of friends and companions, are their sole motives. They dye their hair and eyebrows black, and make the latter join the nose, in the form of an arch; they also stain their nails, the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet with an orange colour, beguiling their slavery by decorating themselves with pearls and diamonds.

I imagine that intrigue must be more rare here than in any other part of the world: the Persians have taken every precaution against it, and their jealousy is seldom over-reached. An adventure which happened, a few days ago, to several individuals of the embassy, and which was near being destructive to them, will serve as an example of what I have just said. Our friends were walking quietly in a garden, without any notion of plotting against the honour of the master of the house; the door of a bath being half open, excited their curiosity; they entered, and a few paces farther brought them into the midst of a harem, which they had

no idea of finding so near. Suddenly the women uttered loud shrieks; the eunuchs and slaves armed themselves with axes and daggers, and our comrades, who in their surprise had still sufficient time to draw their swords to defend themselves, finding all the entrances fastened, could escape from the jealous fury of those menacing argusses only by scaling the walls. This was more than sufficient to cure a propensity to intriguing in Persia! As yet we know nothing of the harems, except from pictures, one of which, representing an interior, has been given to me by a native artist.

The Persians can marry four wives, and maintain as many concubines as their fortune will permit; while the children of each have equal rights to the inheritance of their father. It is said the king has more than two thousand slaves in his harem; and every wealthy individual keeps a number of them according to his means. In a country where it is so easy to gratify the passions there cannot be much prostitution, women of the town are consequently very scarce here, and they are never seen in the streets, being only visited by the very lowest classes of the community.

Arriving at maturity much sooner than in our more temperate climate, the Persian women also decay at an earlier age than those of Europe. At twelve all their forms are developed, and they are married; at thirty, they appear to be more than fifty. The heat of the climate, and an immoderate use of vapour baths, greatly contribute to the fading of their

charms. These baths, which are called Hamâm, are as much frequented in Persia as in Turkey they are particularly recommended by religion; while laziness and idleness also contribute to fill them. Here the Mussulmen have thought proper to reserve for themselves alone, the right of entrance, so that persons of all other religions are excluded; but this prohibition does not prevent the rich Armenians from gaining admittance into them secretly by night, on paying a sum of money, which removes all obstacles. If discovered, both the intruder and proprietors are exposed to heavy punishments, and the latter lose their reputation, for having received persons who are deemed impure.

In our capacity of foreigners, we enjoy some privileges that are not granted to every one: amongst the rest we were admitted into these receptacles without much difficulty, and I am therefore able to give you an exact description of them.

The Persian baths are composed of two principal rooms: in the first the dress is left on alcoves covered with mats or carpets which are spread round the room; then the second is entered, called that of the stoves: the excessive heat concentered here, and the vapour of the hot water which runs down the walls, deprives those who may not have been accustomed to such a temperature of their respiration in the first moment: by degrees, however, they become used to it. This room is entirely lined with broad flagstones, or squares of

marble, and receives only a faint light from some small skylights in the roof : it is heated by subterranean fires, and we may bathe at will in several basins of hot or cold water. Those who wish to be alone, may retire into separate closets more or less heated, at pleasure : they are washed, or may wash themselves with water that issues from cocks placed at regular distances.

When bathers are employed, they place us recumbent on a large slab of marble, rub lightly all the parts of the body with a small bag of hair, and then rub the heels and soles of the feet with pumice stone. This first operation finished they deluge us from head to feet with a light suds, wash us rapidly with hot water, and at length wrap up the head and all the body in warm linen.

In this state we return into the first room and lie down to permit the perspiration to subside, after which we dress ourselves, having first smoked the kalioun and taken a cup of coffee.

Used moderately, these baths are not without their good effects, but when frequented to excess they enervate the body, dry and wrinkle the skin; their ruinous influence is particularly perceptible on the most plump and best formed females.

The same place is common to both sexes, but at different hours: in the morning, a bather mounted on the terrace, proclaims by sound of trumpet that the men are gone away, and that the women may enter in their turn.

The Persian ladies who have not baths in their

houses, never enjoy any pleasures or amusement from home but the above.

I have in a former letter, mentioned the public dancers who are engaged by the men to amuse them at festivals and other parties of pleasure. In imitation of these, the women also employ female dancers in the harems : they are highly diverted with the indecency of their gestures and movements : such a taste, so contrary to all the rules of decorum, must be attributed to the slavery and constraint in which they are held : secluded from the society of men, having nothing to fear from their censure, and without the hope of pleasing them by modesty, they soon cease to blush at any thing ; they are complete strangers to those sentiments of delicacy, which amongst us form the best title of the fair sex to our esteem, add to which, their discourse often turns on very indecent subjects. With respect to dancing, this exercise, abandoned to slaves and profligate women, amongst the Orientals, is very far from obtaining the same favour as with us ; the dancers are despised as vile mercenaries, and the Persians are astonished when we tell them that in Europe the greatest nobles and even kings themselves, do not disdain this amusement.

Music has many charms for them, but it is still in its infancy, like most other arts : it is, however, softer than that of the Turks; and the Persian singing, frequently accompanied with what we call the shake, has less monotony than that of

their Turkish neighbours. The *nei*, a kind of flute, when played by an able musician, is not deficient in a certain degree of harmony, and far preferable to the soporific virtue of their stringed instruments. As to their military music, it is, I believe, impossible to find any that is more truly barbarous. Figure to yourself the united sounds of many trumpets of eight or ten feet in length, in which the performers blow until they are breathless; to this add drums and kettle drums, and you will have but a slight idea of the horrible din daily heard at the king's palace; indeed all the city resounds with it. These military concerts, executed at the summit of a high tower, are one of the prerogatives of the king and the princes of the royal family; they are renewed every morning at sun-rise, and in the evenings at sun-setting.

In giving the above account, I speak as one accustomed to the melodious sounds of European music. In point of taste every thing is relative and arbitrary. A Persian would probably be insensible to the ravishing concords of our orchestras. You have heard of the Turkish ambassador, who, when first present at a performance of the opera, felt great pleasure in the confused noise the musicians made while tuning their instruments, but who remained cold and insensible to the charms of the music itself! The case, whether real or imaginary, is in character with the taste of his nation: I do not attribute it to fana-

ticism, nor the repugnance which that sentiment inspires for all that is foreign, but in reality to national taste. I require no further proof to justify the above assertion, than that the Franks of the Levant and their wives, with very few exceptions, prefer the Turkish and Greek music and singing to our best concerts.

Amongst the Persians, it is nearly the same with all the other arts, and industry in general, as with music and dancing. Their natural sagacity and good inclination, would, however, soon place them on a level with us, if they could have more extended means of instruction; even now there are found among them very able workmen in more than one branch. I have already mentioned these beautiful inlaid doors we saw in the royal castle of Kasri Kadjar, and I do not believe that better could be made in any part of Europe. They have also painters, engravers and enamellers on metals, goldsmiths, &c.

Their painting has been for several centuries past in the same state; it is not deficient in a certain vivacity of colouring which pleases the eye, but their artists have no correct ideas of proportion or perspective. The painters make full length portraits of kings, fabulous heroes, and all those personages who have been ornaments to their country, but they employ themselves chiefly on indecent and military subjects. We have seen pictures of an enormous size, which represented battles, huntings, the king on his throne, surrounded with his

sons and courtiers, &c. Notwithstanding the imperfection of their knowledge, the Persian painters often take good likenesses. They excel in the art of painting birds and flowers in fresco, and the apartments decorated in that style have a fresh and lively air that is very agreeable to the eye.

They have very able engravers on metals and precious stones, and their seals ornamented with arabesques and flowers, are executed with great delicacy; but the gold or silver settings are coarse, and far from corresponding with the principal work; yet the goldsmiths, when a model is given to them, succeed easily in imitating it. The diamond cutters, and especially the enamellers, perform very neat works, in which there is nothing wanting but more taste: the bowls of kalliouns, or pipes of great value, are the best that I have seen of that kind; the nobles and wealthy persons retain these as part of their luxuries. Bridles of gold and silver, and trappings embroidered and enamelled in Persia, are also very much in request throughout all Asia.

In the manufactories of Ispahan and several other cities, beautiful stuffs of gold, silver and silk, calicoes, cotton cloths, painted muslins, &c. are prepared, and in those of Kashan, shawls and webs of silk which imitate similar articles from Cachemire.

The Persian artisans also make beautiful works in steel, damasceened with gold, such as knives, scissars, and other instruments which are placed

in valuable cases, ornamented with looking glasses and paintings. Their inkstands are in this taste: as the public functionaries always carry these in their pockets, and often have occasion to produce them, they like to have them as beautiful and rich as possible.

Lastly, the arms of Ispahan and Khorassan, especially the damasceened sabres and daggers, maintain, as I have already stated, a reputation superior even to that of the Damascus sabres. We have just had a fresh proof of the talents of the Persians, in the adroitness with which they have imitated our muskets, for the new troops, which the king is disciplining in the European style: these might really be taken for our own.

LETTER XXIII.

Festival of Newrouz, or of the New Year—Persian Kalendar—Khalaats or Dresses of Honour—Selam of the King—Ceremonies in which he is engaged at the Newrouz—Offerings of the Chah Zades and the Governors of Provinces—Fireworks—Horse-races—the King's Elephants.

Teheran, April 10, 1808.

I HAVE already stated the origin several authors have ascribed to the Newrouz, and that which I attribute to it myself.* I shall now give you an account of this festival, and of the rejoicings which have succeeded it, during the last days of March and the beginning of the present month.

The king, whose attentions to us have not yet diminished, has, in this instance, treated the ambassador on an equality with the princes of his own family, and every person of the legation has received the same honours as the nobles of the court.

Newrouz, in Persian, signifies the new day: it is the first of Ferwerdin, the first month of the solar year, which, with this nation, begins on the 21st March, at the vernal equinox.†

* See the 15th Letter.

† The Persians use the Arabic kalendar for all that relates to religion and public affairs; but, in certain cases, they follow the solar months of the ancient Persians, which were also those of the Greeks and Egyptians, and by which, no doubt, the French kalendar, adopted during the revolution, has been drawn, with this sole difference, that their year commences in the month of March, at the vernal equinox, whereas ours began in September, at the autumnal equinox.

The following are the names of those months, with those of ours to which they correspond:

	SPRING.		
1.	Ferwerdin,	21st or 22d March,	Germinal.
2.	Ardebehicht,	April,	Floreal.
3.	Khordad,	May,	Prairial.
	SUMMER.		
4.	Tir,	June,	Messidor.
5.	Murdad,	July,	Thermidor.
6.	Chehriwer,	August,	Fructidor.
	AUTUMN.		
7.	Mihr,	September,	Vendemiaire.
8.	Aban,	October,	Brumaire.
9.	Azer,	November,	Frimaire.
	WINTER.		
10.	Dei,	December,	Nivose.
11.	Behmen,	January,	Pluviose.
12.	Esfendarmuz,	February,	Ventose.

Each of those months contain only thirty days, they add to them five complimentary days for the common years, and six for bissextile.

At Newrouz the Persians make mutual presents and visits, as in Europe on new year's day, while the wealthy, or those in easy circumstances, dress themselves in new clothes at the same period.

On the eve of Newrouz, the king sends to his ministers, courtiers, and to ambassadors who may be at his court, a quantity of sweetmeats and fruits, as also khalaats or dresses of honour, in which they are expected to present themselves on the following day at his selam.

The ambassador received the same kind of khalaat as the chah zades, and similar to those of the khans and mirzas.

The Persians still reckon time by the Alexandrine months, according to the old style, previous to the Gregorian reform. Those months are also in use amongst the modern Greeks; but the Persians have preserved them in the order that the ancient Romans gave them.

1.	Mart or Azar,	March.
2.	Nizan,	April.
3.	Mai or Ajar,	May.
4.	Azivan,	June.
5.	Temmouz,	July.
6.	Agostos,	August.
7.	Eiloul,	September.
8.	Techrin Ewel,	October.
9.	Techrin Sani,	November.
10.	Kianoun Ewel,	December.
11.	Kianoun Sani,	January.
12.	Choubat,	February.

The following are the names of the week days in the order which the Persians give them:

Sunday,	Iek Chembè.
Monday,	Dou Chembè.
Tuesday,	Se Chembè.
Wednesday,	Tchar Chembè.
Thursday,	Pentch Chembè.
Friday,	Chech Chembè.
Saturday,	Helt Chembè.

On the 2nd March, at ten o'clock in the morning, we repaired, with the general, to the palace of Feth Ali Chah, and crossed the whole of the first court on horseback. We were not dressed in our khalaats, wearing only the Cachemire shawls as scarfs, which formed part of the present. Tchirag Ali Khan, the introducer of ambassadors, received the legation in the defter, or audience chamber of the Ittimad ud Dewlet, and whilst waiting for the ceremony, we were asked to sit down on European chairs.

A short time afterwards appeared the Ittimad ud Dewlet, or grand vizir, Mirza Muhammed Chefi, who seemed much surprised at seeing us without our habits of honour. During more than half an hour he employed all the resources of the cunning and complimentary politeness of the Persians, to induce us at least to put on the pelisses of gold cloth over our uniforms. It was in vain, his rhetoric was thrown away, and could not succeed in persuading us. He was answered that we were desirous of appearing before his highness in our national dress, that it was not our custom to conceal it, that the Persian ambassadors when they had the honour to be admitted to the presence of our emperor, were not obliged to dress themselves in French habits and that we had already put on the Cachemire shawls which proceeded from the king's munificence. We endeavoured to gain as much time as possible in the discussion: at length,

finding that the minister insisted, it was intimated to him, as a last excuse, that our konaks being very distant from the royal palace, the khalaats would arrive too late, even if they should be sent for. The vizir concluded by conceding the point, and went out, saying, that it was necessary he should at least inform the king.

He returned in ten minutes, and told us that his majesty consented to receive us in our French dresses.* At the same instant, three discharges of artillery in the court, announced to the people that Feth Ali Chah had ascended his throne, when Mirza Muhammed Chefi again went out to return to his post.

We followed the ambassador, and entered immediately, under the guidance of Tchirag Ali Khan, into the court where the king gives his solemn audiences. This court, or rather garden, is called the Gulistan, or Rose Bed. It is a parallelogram of about three hundred paces long, by one hundred and fifty wide, shaded with beautiful

* If European ambassadors, accredited to the Grand Signor, had, from the beginning, used more firmness, their successors would not be still obliged to appear before that monarch in the trim of a ridiculous masquerade. With the Orientals every thing depends on the beginning: amongst them the least grant or concession becomes an *adet*, or custom, and that custom becomes a law. But it is now useless to dwell on this subject; as the evil is without a remedy. The least acquaintance with the Turks is sufficient to prove that no change can now be effected in a ceremonial which has lasted more than three hundred years.

plane-trees, and planted with roses, jasmine, and all kinds of flowers. An oblong basin divides it into two equal parts. Several little fountains rise in the centre, and its borders were covered with fruits and refreshments in gold and silver dishes, and in vases of Chinese porcelain. The nobles were ranged standing and in silence, at distances more or less near the throne, according to their rank. The chah zades, to the number of twelve, were also standing, and placed according to their ages. When we had made three profound bows, we were requested to take places below those princes, and the king then invited the ambassador to approach him, when the latter advanced into the hall near his throne.

This hall is at the end of the garden, and almost on a level with the ground; it is lined all over with looking-glasses, gildings, and Persian paintings. The king wore a tiara sparkling with diamonds, and was surrounded by all the attributes of royalty: his majesty seated on a pedestal of white marble, enriched with gold, and supported behind by a cushion embroidered with fine pearls: he wore bracelets of precious stones, in the midst of which shone the deriai nour, or sea of light, one of the largest diamonds known, and smoked from a kaloun shining with emeralds and rubies. The principal officers of his household, ranged round the throne, pompously displayed all the crown jewels in gold and silver gilt dishes. I confess

to you I had never seen a more magnificent spectacle. It was the first time we could contemplate one of the most powerful monarchs of Asia in all his glory; and it was no longer possible for us to entertain a doubt of those immense riches, of which the Persians so often spoke to us. There is not the least exaggeration in the description I give you of this imposing ceremony; add the brilliancy of a beautiful day, and that of the sun's rays at noon reflected in a thousand ways, from this prodigious heap of gold, silver, and jewels, and you will still have but a faint idea of what we saw on this occasion.

The ambassador having pronounced a short address in French, repeated in Persian by M. Jouannin, principal interpreter to the embassy, the introducer Tchirag Ali Khan came himself to fill our hands with new pieces of gold and silver money, according to an ancient custom practised at this court. Its object is to remind the receiver that the king is the sole dispenser of the wealth of his kingdom, and that he distributes or withdraws it at his pleasure. This is, in fact, the real triumph of despotism. We were next served with iced sherbet. Such is all that remains of the ancient public festivals, formerly held at the Newrouz.

The ceremony was concluded by a long oration addressed to the king by his chief mollah: the most extravagant praises and hyperboles, which are the common flowers of the oriental style,

were not spared; so that his majesty, if fond of incense, received a large supply, and might enjoy it at his leisure.

We at length took leave, and left the garden, after having repeated the three profound bows we had been made to perform on entering. When we returned through the first court, we saw the king's elephants, covered with long trappings of red cloth, and mounted by Indian kornacs.

The king did not shew any displeasure, at least while we were present, at our refusal to assume the khalaats. As this prince is greatly distinguished by good sense and discernment, I should be inclined to believe that this resistance has rather contributed to give him a favourable idea of our national character; his affability to us on that day being still more evident than at the two first audiences. His countenance was open and gracious; he sent to inquire how we were, if the climate of Persia agreed with us, and if we were satisfied in being at his court. I suspect it is impossible to expect greater favours on the part of a sovereign so absolute; and if we remain much longer here, the interest and kindness which he manifests towards us, will most probably end in alarming the courtiers, and perhaps make them our enemies.

Six days after the Newrouz, the ambassador and all the legation were again invited by the king, to the festival, at which the governors of provinces present their pechkechs, or voluntary tributes.

This ceremony takes place in the first court of the royal palace, where we had witnessed the representation of the taxies, and we were placed on the same terrace, not far from the kiosk of Feth Ali Chah.

The Chah Zadé Muhammed Veli Mirza, who governs Khorassan, was the first that presented himself: he bowed profoundly before the king his father, and presented fifty superb horses of his province, an equal number of mules and camels, Cachemire shawls, several bags of turquoises, &c. the latter objects were on broad wooden trays, carried by the officers of his household. After these presents had passed before the king, they were sent into the interior of the palace.

Prince Muhammed Ali Khan, governor of Kerman Chah, not being at court, sent the offering by his vizir: it consisted of Cachemire shawls, arms, such as lances, muskets, pistols, and a great number of camels and mules laden with carpets and fine felts.

The vizir of Muhammed Kouli Mirza, another chah zade, who commands in Mazenderan, then presented in the name of his master, more Cachemire shawls, stuffs of gold, silver and silk, wooden spoons of delicate workmanship, arms, camels, and mules.

Those of the chah zade, Hussein Ali Mirza, who governs the province of Farsistan, were also remarkable in their kind. Amongst other objects, we saw a great quantity of sugar and syrups,

mules and camels laden with coffee and tambako, or smoking tobacco, from Chiraz.

But the tribute of the Emin ud Dewlet, Hadji, Muhammed Hussein Khan, Beylerbey of Ispahan, surpassed all the former in magnificence. Besides superb Turkoman horses and rich stuffs, it also included that precious metal, so eagerly sought by all mankind; and for which the king of Persia is said to have a very decided predilection. Fifty mules, ornamented with Cachemire shawls and streamers, carried each one thousand tomans in money, a sum equal to about 45,000l.!

Every year at the same period, these presents are renewed; and by this an idea may be formed of the immense riches which the private treasure of the king of Persia must contain. Games of all kinds succeeded to the presentation of the tributes, which were sent into the king's palace, according as they passed in review before his majesty.

First came men running on stilts of more than twenty feet high; others performing feats of strength and balancing, turning on the slack rope, or carrying on their heads, a pile of earthen pots, surmounted with a vase of flowers; then dancers and combats of rams that were excited against each other. These exercises were followed by rope-dancing, performed by two young children. I am sorry for our performers on the rope, but they are still very far from equalling the dexterity of these, as you shall perceive.

The rope was of hair, and consequently less flexible than a hempen one: being strained on two trestles of more than forty feet in height, it ascended almost imperceptibly as high as the top of the king's kiosk. After having made several gambols with the assistance of their poles on the part of the rope which was horizontal, one of the two dancers, ten years old at most, mounted completely as high as the terrace which crowns the pavilion, and then descended backwards from a height of more than eighty feet. We remarked with pleasure, that several men placed beneath the cord, followed all the movements of the child, ready to receive him in a large blanket if his foot had happened to have slipped. We did not suppose the Persians were capable of such an attention, especially in the king's presence. These dancers are called in Persian, Djanbaz, meaning, him who plays or risks his soul. This expression, contemptuous in itself, intimates that games of this kind are discouraged by religion; and is nearly synonymous with that of excommunication, with which our actors were once complimented. The term of Serbaz, which signifies a man who stakes his head, might have been applied to them with still greater propriety; but amongst the Persians it has a more noble acceptation, and is applied peculiarly to soldiers. But I shall have occasion to mention this phrase hereafter.

The king's elephants came, fortunately, to interrupt a spectacle which made us tremble

more than once for the life of the principal actor. These animals, of a much larger size than those exhibited in Europe, were richly caparisoned, and mounted by Indians. Their bodies were painted with various colours, while their trunks, tails, and tusks were gilded. We have not as yet attempted to derive advantage from their sagacity and docility, and it is a very general prejudice amongst Europeans, that these enormous masses can neither lie down nor even sit: nothing can be more erroneous than such an idea; here a child makes them obey his orders, and they are trained to kneel in the manner of camels, to salute the king with their proboscis, cry out and shake their ears when they are ordered, in short, to raise themselves on their hind legs.

You know that amongst the ancient Persians the elephants were employed to advantage in the armies, and that they carried towers filled with combatants, who could pour showers of arrows on the enemy, with scarcely any risk to themselves. This custom no longer exists, the invention of fire arms, and the cannon especially, would render it too dangerous: elephants are at present, at least in Persia, merely objects of parade: the king maintains a certain number in his stables; these are under the care of Indian kornacs. Far from imprisoning them as we do in Eurrope, they are taken out daily through the streets of the city, and there

never has resulted the smallest accident from it. The dealers in fruit and vegetables are the only persons who have had cause to complain of those promenades. It has been remarked that one of these animals whenever he passes before the shop of a baccal, who is established near the royal square, never fails to carry off, in a dexterous manner, a bunch of carrots from his stall: and he adheres so closely to his old habits, that he never applies to any other.*

A group of tumblers dexterously mounted the largest of the king's elephants, and our young rope-dancer came again for a moment to give us new alarms, having made an extremely dangerous leap backwards from the crupper of the saddle.

Naked men armed with maces, and wrestlers, appeared afterwards before the king. The first resembled savages, they struck their clubs to-

* A curious anecdote is related respecting an elephant, and which proves that these animals, naturally docile and grateful for the cares bestowed upon them, are also vindictive on certain occasions. A kornac was accustomed to lead his elephants to drink at a pond near the stall of a cobler, who had taken a liking to one of these animals, and always gave him something to eat as he passed. One day, the cobler being in an ill humour, refused his usual pittance to his favourite, and instead thereof, wounded him in his trunk with his awl. The elephant withdrew and went on to the pond, where he filled his trunk with mud and dirt, and on his return spouted it all in the poor cobler's face!

gether, but without injuring each other. It was not so with the second; their combats have something so revolting, and hideous, that I am loth to mention it to you. The conqueror, that is to say, he who succeeded in throwing his adversary on his back, went to the foot of the kiosk to receive a piece of money which the king threw down to him.

These spectacles, worthy of a nation of children, though not more frivolous than many European pastimes, but which are nevertheless full of attraction here, were prolonged untill nightfall; the king retired during half an hour, to say his evening prayer, and then returned for the fireworks. I have but seldom seen any equal to these, even in France: they extended over all the great court of the palace, which is three hundred paces long, and five hundred broad, also on some of the terraces that surround it. They commenced with the Bengal flames, which had a very fine effect; then they let off in confusion a prodigious quantity of cases, crackers and rockets. Suns, figures of men and animals, trees and houses of fire, every instant presented new scenes; and there was nothing wanting but more order and symmetry to render the spectacle magnificent.

The next day was appropriated to horse-racing. At six o'clock in the morning we left the city, to proceed into the plain of Teheran, where the king's tent had been previously pitched.

Feth Ali Chah soon appeared; he was in a military dress, and accompanied by several of his sons. The march was opened with zemboureks, small cannons carried on camels, and by four elephants ornamented with red trimmings, and carrying towers or pavilions, gilded and lined with looking glasses.

When the king alighted, to enter his tent, a general discharge of the zemboureks was fired, and horsemen magnificently dressed and armed in the antique style, started out into the midst of the area, to perform a species of tournament, until the races should begin.

The horses admitted to the competition, had departed the day before. Some of them had to run a space of three fersenks, fifteen miles, in an hour and a half; others two fersenks, three leagues, in one hour; others, one fersenk, in half an hour. Prizes were reserved for the winners; the first, amounting to one hundred tomans; the second, to fifty, and the third, to ten.

The horses of the three courses arrived successively: they were rode by children dressed merely in a shirt, pantaloons and a handkerchief on their heads. According as they reached the winning-post, the names of the persons to whom they belonged were proclaimed. The king's horses gained, as they ought, the first prize. All the nobility of the court enter theirs in the list; they are previously prepared for this violent exercise, by diminishing their food daily to make them lean, a process by which the greater part of them are ruined, or completely foundered.

After the races, his majesty sent an invitation to the ambassador and his train to alight and go into his tent, where we entered, conducted by the grand vizir. Feth Ali Chah was seated on a throne covered with gold and silver enameled; a vase of flowers ornamented each of the arms of this seat. He wore a tikmé of blue velvet embroidered with fine pearls, and a cap of Astracan black lambskin. The interior of the tent was lined with stuffs of gold and silver; there were several mirrors in it, a rich cushion embroidered with pearls, and a portrait of a female in embroidery.

The chah zades, ranged in a line before the king, according to age, were leaning on large bows, and had leaden quivers on their shoulders: the richness of the dresses, and their bracelets sparkling with precious stones, produced a very imposing effect, which was heightened by the brilliancy of a beautiful day. Below these princes stood two officers of the palace, one of whom carried the mace, and the other the large shield of the king, both enriched with emeralds and rubies.

Feth Ali Chah conversed with the general more than a quarter of an hour: to show him the expertness of his sons, he ordered one of the chah zades, of seven or eight years old at

the utmost, to shoot several arrows at an object he pointed out to him; the young prince obeyed, and discharged a score of them at the running footmen ranged in a file before the elephants. Though his strength did not allow him to reach them, the attitude and looks of the servants did not the less betray fear and inquietude: at each arrow they were seen bowing the head, then raising and lowering it again: but from respect to the king, none of them attempted to quit his place. This amusement, though savouring rather too much of the practical joke, was at length terminated. The king intended to have amused us; and this prince, from whom a foreigner is sure to receive nothing but marks of favour and kindness, wished to give us a new proof of attention, by sending an order to the kornacs to advance with the elephants, that we might examine them more conveniently.

We afterwards separated from his majesty, who soon remounted his horse, to return to the palace. Thus ended this festival, which is the last I have to describe.

Reposing our eyes a little, dazzled as they are with the brilliancy of such oriental pomp, we shall next direct them to objects, less splendid, no doubt, but which are still worthy of interesting you.

LETTER XXIV.

Of Justice in Persia.—The Police, &c. &c.

Teheran, April 20th, 1808.

In Persia, all criminal justice, as I have already said, emanates directly from the sovereign in the capital; and in the provinces, from the chah zades, or khans, who govern them. The king holds in his hands the lives and fortunes of his subjects; and when his disposition inclines him to cruelty or avarice, he may despoil them of both at his pleasure. The Cheik ul Islam had formerly a deliberative voice in criminal affairs, and his fetwa, always grounded on the decisions of the Koran, was necessary for the punishment of malefactors. For a long time past the power of this high priest has considerably diminished, while the little he retains is in reality only a form. The continual increase of despotism has silenced religion and its ministers; at present the king's will is the supreme law, and there is no intermediate power to impede its progress. It is therefore truly fortunate for the Persians, when they are governed by a prince like Feth Ali Chah. This monarch, though accused of an excessive love of gold, does not, like some of his predecessors, enjoy the

capricious effusion of human blood; and if, as it has been asserted, one of the first acts of his government on ascending the throne, was to order the execution of twelve thousand rebels at Kasbinn, and to have their heads rolled into the bazars of that city, the fault should be attributed rather to the barbarous customs of kings of this country, to impose respect at first on the people by terrible examples, than to his personal character. Those atrocities have not been renewed.

The Persian punishments still savour of the cruelty of the ancient kings, and they are derived from the most remote times: in general they have their origin in the *lex talionis*, which was at all times, in the East, the basis of criminal justice. With money, however, justice and the relations of the dead or offended person may be mollified, and the penalty incurred by murder or theft eluded, on payment of a sum fixed by the complainant or his family. The assassin who has not the means of thus redeeming his life, is quartered or embowelled alive; he is carried about in that state, until he expires, through the streets of the city, and suspended by his feet, at the tail of a camel. Robbers are exposed, during several days, at the pillory in the midst of the bazars, and then trodden to death by elephants. Latterly, several individuals who had committed a considerable robbery at the house of the Ittimad ud Dewlet, were condemned to this punishment by the king; they had already suffered the first part of their sentence,

and were to receive the remainder in the presence of his majesty, and of the injured minister, on the day of the horse-races; but their punishment was commuted at the intercession of Mirza Muhammed Chefi himself. Since our arrival, we have been so fortunate as not to hear of any capital punishment, which, in my opinion, is the greatest eulogy that can be pronounced on the reigning sovereign. How many others, in his place, would indulge themselves in abusing an unlimited authority!

The khans or nobles, who have committed any great crime, are punished differently from the common people; either their eyes are torn out, or they are beheaded.

The bastinado on the soles of the feet, is the punishment for common crimes; the criminal is made to lie on his back, with his feet naked, and strongly tied to a wooden bar, which two men hold up, whilst two others strike alternately with supple sticks as far as the number of blows ordered. These sometimes amount to a thousand, and he who has suffered this chastisement, if he does not die, is often crippled for the remainder of his life. It happens also, sometimes, that the sufferer bribes his executioners, in which case the latter make a great noise, and do little mischief: making their blows fall on the piece of wood which retains the feet of the victim, while the quickness of their movements prevents the spectators from perceiving the elusion of justice.

Chardin and other travellers, mention some additional punishments, from which I shall refrain from reminding you; perhaps I have already said even too much on this subject. They also assert, that formerly a triangular piece of wood was placed about the necks of insolvent debtors, and persons refusing to pay their creditors; but they were not deprived of their liberty for that offence, and might go out and attend freely to their business. I do not know whether this custom still exists, but we have never witnessed an instance of it.

All law-suits are decided at Teheran, by the vizirs, and the Mollah Bachi, or Cheik-ul Islam, according to their nature. If it concerns assaults, quarrels, or personal injury, the affair is in the department of the former; in matters of rights of property, litigations, and pecuniary interests, it appertains to the functions of the latter. In the provinces, the khans and ministers of religion, who at the same time fill the office of cadi, are respectively, each in his jurisdiction, the regular judges of all disputes. The law-suits are never procrastinated as amongst us: and a point of law, or discussion, which in Europe would endure for whole years, is decided in Persia in a single hearing. The most impartial justice does not always preside at these rapid trials, while the more rich and powerful are almost sure to gain their suit. As to the parties they plead their own causes: but with all their defects cannot we profit by such examples of promptitude in legal decisions?

Barristers and attornies are unknown to the Persians, as also all that farrago of writings which often render a law-suit ruinous even to him who gains it. The judge orders a summary of the cause to be drawn up on a sheet of paper, he hears successively the plaintiff and defendant; and after having reflected or appeared to reflect during some minutes, he pronounces a sentence, from which an appeal may be made to the supreme commander of the province, or to the king himself. When the latter is addressed, he seldom refuses to do justice, as we have had an instance lately. Several inhabitants of the country came to complain at the foot of the throne against a khan who tyrannized over and ruined them by his extortions. The king summoned the unpopular chief to Teheran, and after having ascertained the truth of the accusation, caused several hundred blows of a cane to be inflicted on the soles of his lordship's feet, in his own presence.

Highway robbers are very rare in Persia; travelling is perfectly safe in this empire; the police being more uniform in it, and better regulated than in Turkey. Though there is neither a general police nor marshalsea, the safety of the roads is maintained by a corps called the rahdars,* who are at the same time collectors of the customhouse duties and town dues. Detachments

* From the Persian words, *rah*, road, and *dar*, having.

of these rahdars are met at regular distances, posted so as to be able to lend each other assistance in case of alarm; they scrupulously examine all travellers who appear suspicious, and are the more interested in performing their duty properly, as they are made personally responsible for the robberies committed in the districts confided to their care. It is the same in the towns and villages. The inhabitants of the quarter where the crime is committed, are required to deliver the culprit up to justice, or to reimburse the value of the objects stolen at their own expence. I shall not examine how far such measures agree with the principles of strict equity; as we should consider the nature of the country and its manners, and think only of the results.

The daroga is, in all the towns of Persia, an officer whose functions have some resemblance to those of a commissary general of police: he superintends the safety of the town, preserves good order in the streets and bazars, inspects the taverns, public houses, and other places of resort; he has the power of inflicting the bastinado on those who commit breaches of the peace, and to imprison debtors who do not make good their obligations; as he has also the chief inspection of the houses of ill fame, and can suppress or tolerate them at will, he generally knows how to derive advantage from that power, and ransoms at his pleasure their inmates and visitors. The daroga of Teheran has under his orders

another officer called mirahdas, who commands the tufenktchis, or guards appointed for preserving public tranquillity during the night. The latter armed with a matchlock, or a mere cudgel, are placed in detachments, at the cross ways and squares; they sometimes patrole during the night, and cry out to passengers to avoid approaching them too nearly. They have not a guard room, and retire to the first shed which offers them an asylum; where they hang up their lantern, and place themselves in ambush to surprise vagabonds and disturbers of the public peace. When they apprehend a robber, the mirahdas sends him temporarily into one of the city prisons, until the judge can pass sentence on him. Those who have committed minor crimes, appear the next day before the daroga, or are judged by the mirahdas himself, who condemns, according to circumstances, either to prison or the bastinado. The cudgel is here, as in Turkey, the grand specific for all evils, the redress of every injury, and the true minister of police. The nobility have also arrogated to themselves the privilege of applying this punishment to their servants and vassals.

The mouhtesib is an inspector who superintends the quality of provisions, fixes the prices of them and prevents the dealers from selling by false weights: to this effect he visits them frequently, and punishes transgressors according to the rigour of the laws, when he, himself,

is not in collusion with them; for he is not always inaccessible to bribery, and often consents to sell his protection to the dealers, and wink at their roguery. It is to be hoped, however, that under the reigning prince, malversations of this nature are not frequent, at least in the capital. The severity of the king, his love of justice, and his facility of access, ought to retain within the bounds of duty all public officers who might otherwise intend to deviate from them. It is to this salutary fear, rather than to the national character, that may be attributed the good order which now exists in Persia.

I do not believe that integrity is a very common virtue amongst the agents of despotic power, where the means of providing for their own safety is generally the chief motive of their actions. Under a weak and cruel monarch, they abandon themselves boldly to their inclination for rapine and tyranny; because, with such a master the greatest crimes are easily redeemed by money. If they serve a just and inflexible prince, they will be, it is true, more circumspect, but not less corrupt: kept within bounds by their fears, the only good that can then be expected from them is, the negative virtue of their doing no harm.*

* Tavernier, who sometimes praises even to exaggeration the good order and justice which prevailed in Persia, relates the following circumstance, which I cannot avoid inserting here, as an honourable exception to the national character of this people.

A baker of the city of Tauris came to complain to the khan, that the judge of the police would not raise the price of bread, and that he could gain nothing by the sale of it. The khan represented that it was not in his department, it being the magistrate's office to regulate such matters; but the other, flattering himself that the khan could order what he wished from his own authority, the judge of the police not being inclined to do any thing, sent him a present of fifty tomans. The khan perceiving the evil designs and roguery of the baker, who intended to enrich himself at the expence of the people, and who had besides such a bad opinion of himself as to believe that he was capable of selling justice, ordered that he should be taken to the market place and receive blows of a cane on the soles of his feet, until he consented to bring fifty more tomans, which the khan immediately distributed to the poor, ordering the price of bread to be lowered instead of raising it.

One of the greatest reproaches that can be made against travellers in general, is, in my opinion, that of praising too highly, or vilifying too much, the nations whose laws and manners they investigate. It is thus, that from some partial examples, very often invented, some raise to the skies the justice and uprightness of the Oriental judges; and others, on the contrary, treat them with extreme severity. I do not pretend to offer myself as an infallible authority, but you may have observed, hitherto, that I have constantly endeavoured to avoid those two extremes. If I have blamed whatever has appeared repre-

hensible in the Persians, I have also been solicitous to do them justice where they seemed to merit it. Perhaps I may have fallen into some errors to their disadvantage, but it has not been intentionally: I am inclined to believe that I have observed them closely, without having deviated from truth whenever I mentioned their good qualities.

LETTER XXV.

Diseases in Persia.—Persian Armies, Cavalry.—Review of the Troops.—Tufenktchis or Infantry. — Artillery. — Zemboureks. — King of Persia's Guards, Goulams, Nasâktchis, Chatirs, and Ferrechs.—The King's Eunuchs.

Teheran, May 1, 1808.

I HAVE not, as yet, mentioned the diseases peculiar to the country we reside in at present, for during the winter we have passed here, all our party has, thank God, enjoyed very good health, and even those of our sick, who had at first given us some uneasiness, are at length recovered, in consequence of several months repose, and of the improved quality of our food. But as it is I shall not enter into long details on a subject of this nature; I am not a physician, and will not therefore attempt to expatiate on a matter so foreign to my pursuits. All that I can inform you is, that diseases exist here as well as in other places, and perhaps even more frequently than elsewhere; but, at least, there is nothing to fear in Persia from that destructive scourge, which seems to have established its seat in the Ottoman empire. If the plague be brought here by some stranger,

as in the case in which we so unfortunately found ourselves,* it is never propagated, and rarely extends its deadly influence beyond a few victims: to what can this be owing? Do not imagine, however, that the Persians owe their health to the salutary institution of quarantine, much less to the prudent precautions which are taken in Europe to guard against the attacks of contagion. They are, in that respect, as improvident as the Turks, and owe their good luck entirely to the climate, which does not permit, as it would seem, the plague to be naturalized here. On the other hand, the Persians are subject to other diseases and infirmities, many of which they have in common with the inhabitants of almost every country, while others appertain peculiarly to themselves. The first are putrid and malignant fevers, which the position of this capital especially renders so frequent and pernicious, that all the court, and a part of the inhabitants of the city, as I have already stated to you, are obliged to abandon this residence during the summer, to go and encamp in the midst of the plains of Sultanié. The second are opthalmias of a very dangerous nature, which appear almost every season: these I attribute, in a great measure, to the excessive dryness of the air, the sands that cover the soil of Persia, and to the almost total absence of verdure. Since the heats have

* See the 10th Letter.

begun, many persons of the legation have complained of this indisposition; I also have suffered by it during several days, and the fear of a relapse has induced me to solicit the ambassador for permission to leave Persia, and return to Constantinople. The Persians, whose uncleanliness I have described to you, augment their distempers by the means they employ to cure them. They cover their diseased eyes with a small piece of blue cotton cloth, often very dirty, and scarcely ever change it; thus rendering the remedy worse than the disease; but even experience does not correct them, and of a hundred inhabitants of a town, nearly one half are met with similar rags suspended from their caps.

Before I quit Teheran, it remains for me to state the military forces of Persia, and to mention several other objects, of which I have not had time hitherto to acquaint you. To these shall be devoted the remainder of the present letter.

The whole strength of the Persian armies consists in the cavalry. Each province, or rather the great vassals of the king, that is to say, the khans, who are at the head of the military tribes, are obliged to furnish a certain number of them; and the total, when the number of those tribes, and the population of all Persia is considered, cannot amount to above one hundred and fifty or two hundred thousand men.

These military tribes, or taifes, to give them

their true name, form four great divisions, the names of which are taken from the language used by them. The first is the Turkish tongue, turk zeban; the second, the Curdish tongue, kurd zeban; the third, the Arab tongue, areb zeban: the fourth, the Loure, or Laure tongue, lour zeban.

The Efchars and the Kadjars who belong to the Turkish tongue are the most numerous tribe of the whole four. The first has been always reputed the bravest, and was long the most powerful: the second, to which the reigning prince belongs, has latterly deprived the former of its pre-eminence.*

The pay of the Persian cavalry is trifling, and even this they receive only in time of war: they also receive premiums when they perform any distinguished action, and they have, besides, the benefit of pillage and booty, very accommodating resources, which are admirably favourable to their indiscipline! They arm and mount themselves at their own expence, and are dressed completely in the antique style; a steel helmet, a cuirass, or coat of mail, a lance and shield, forming their usual accoutrements. Some of them also carry a bow in their hand and a quiver on the shoulder: in short, were it not for the pistol and carbine, which several of them add to the above equipment, they might still be mistaken for the Persians of the time of Xerxes and Darius.

* On reading the Travels in Persia, by Morier, I have remarked a very considerable difference in the calculation made by that traveller of the number of men composing certain tribes, and the informations taken on the spot by M. Jouannin, who resided much longer in Persia than M. Morier. I think the latter is mistaken when he asserts, for instance, that the tribes of the Baktiars and the Tailis (who belong to the Loure tongue) consist each of one hundred thousand families. M. Jouannin gives the first thirty thousand individuals only, and the second, thirty or forty; whereas, he makes the Efchars alone amount to eighty-eight thousand men, and the Kadjars to nearly forty thousand.

This brilliant cavalry does not know how to fight in battle array: the degree of perfection to which European military tactics are arrived, would not permit the former, certainly, either to withstand the impetuosity and regular shock of our cavalry of the line, or to break our infantry; but they are excellent for turning the flanks of an army, and in skirmishing; the swords they use, much superior to ours in temper, make wide and deep wounds, which are generally mortal.

Every six months the king reviews the cavalry stationed in the capital and its environs. This review does not at all resemble the military parades which we call by the same name. The chah is seated in a kiosk at the end of the first court of his palace, and the horsemen are confusedly collected together at one of the two extremities. The chiefs of tribes, placed beneath the window of his majesty, call in a loud voice each soldier in his tribe, when the latter replies by gal-

lopping across the court, before the pavilion, and then places himself at the opposite side. The review being ended, the men who are no longer capable of service, and those who desire to leave the army, are dismissed or discharged; measures are then taken to fill up the vacancies, and each horseman returns home.

The Persian infantry is composed of tufeuktchis or fusileers. This species of troops, the most miserable that can be imagined, never amounts to more than fifty or sixty thousand men; it consists of the unfortunate peasants, taken from the cultivation of their lands, by the nobles, for the king's service. These people are greatly despised by the cavalry. Their pay is very trifling, and, I believe, they are obliged to clothe and equip themselves at their own expense. I have seen some of them who had no other dress than a pair of blue linen pantaloons, and a pelisse of sheep's skin. They are armed with a matchlock, dagger, and sabre.

The infantry service has always been held in little esteem by the Persians: it is still with them, as it was in France during the feudal times, abandoned to vassals and the lowest classes of the people, whilst the cavalry alone is reputed a noble and honourable service. There is every appearance, however, that they will soon abandon a prejudice as unjust as it is unfounded. At the desire of the king, and especially of Prince Abbas Mirza, our officers are actually regulating a new corps of infantry at Tauris, on the same plan as that of Europe:

when the Persians are once enabled to appreciate all the advantages of our tactics, and those of military discipline, they will be obliged to acknowledge, as all civilized nations have, for a long time past, that infantry ought to be the base and principal force of armies. I shall soon see the new troops, on my return by Tauris, and will give you an account of them in a future letter.

The Persians are also equally backward in respect to artillery: it might even be said, that this science, so perfect in Europe, is totally unknown to them. It is true, that they have some pieces of cannon of large calibre, which they captured from the Portuguese, when the troops of that country were forced to evacuate Ormuz, and some others taken from the Russians during the last war; but they do not know how to use them. They are either dismounted or placed on clumsy carriages, in the principal court of the royal palace. The zemboureks, small pieces that carry balls of a pound weight, are the only ones they use in their military expeditions: these turn on a swivel on the pack-saddle of a camel, the crupper of which is ornamented with two flags, and the zembourektchi, who is dressed in a fantastic manner, and wears a cap more like that of a rope-dancer than an artillery-man, turns and points it at pleasure. In a battle, such artillery must be more destructive to the cannoneers themselves than to the enemy: when they have loaded their guns, they advance their camels in a quick trot, confusedly, and return

when they have discharged them. I leave you to judge of the disorder that must result from this method of fighting, and what ravages such heavy animals as camels are likely to create in the ranks. Thus the Persians have always been beaten, whenever they were opposed to a nation more expert than themselves in the art of war: the Russians have constantly had the advantage in the last campaign; and must always obtain it, until the Persians change their system, and that period, perhaps, is not far distant, as I shall soon have occasion to inform you.

The corps of the zembourektchis is commanded by a khan of an inferior order, named Muhammed Khan; this officer seems to possess but little influence at court, nor is his rank considered very elevated: but what I can assure you is, though, in other respects, a very brave man, Muhammed Khan enjoys the reputation of an arrant drunkard, and completely merits it. A few days ago, he gave an entertainment to the ambassador, and we were all invited to breakfast with him. At the conclusion of the repast, after having drank plentifully of Chiraz and Ispahan wine, he wished to give us a new specimen of his powers, by swallowing, almost at one draught, a large bottle of Russian spirits, in which one of our friends had maliciously put some pinches of pepper. The beverage took effect, and it was soon necessary to carry off the zembourektchi

bachi on the shoulders of one of his servants. This is one act of Persian prowess, and certainly an odd mode of entertaining us.

There is also a toptchi bachi, or general of heavy artillery; but his title is merely honorary, since there are no guns now in use, except those of the zemboureks: hereafter it may become more important, and apply to a real object. Several French officers of distinguished merit, among whom are Messrs. Tabvier and Reboul, have established a cannon foundry at Ispahan, without any other aid than their zeal and talents; and though they have long had to combat against some intrigues, they have succeeded, by dint of care and perseverance, in placing this establishment on a respectable footing, and Feth Ali Chah owes to them the first field pieces which have been seen in Persia.

This subject naturally leads me to inform you of the military household of the king of Persia. It is composed of a certain number of cavalry, who are called goulams, or slaves. But it does not follow from this, that they are really in a state of slavery; the term is figurative, like that of koul, which is given in Turkey to the janizaries, and relates to the origin of each of those two corps, composed, in the beginning, of Christian children captured in war, or sold by their parents, such as were also the Mamelukes of Egypt. This name has, no doubt, been continued, in order to remind them of the passive obedience they

owe their master. The goulams always escort the king when he appears in public, or when he leaves the city to hunt: they do not surround him so as to conceal from the people the view of their sovereign, but, on the contrary, ride behind him at a considerable distance; some tufenktchis or fusileers, better armed and clothed than the rest of the infantry, also form a part of the king's guards, which are several thousands in number. As yet, they have no other arms than a dagger and matchlock. Our officers have also to form select companies, at Tauris, destined hereafter to compose the royal guard, and replace the present tufenktchis.

The guards of the interior are called nasaktchis: their functions are to maintain order and tranquillity in the various parts of the palace where entrance is permitted. Armed with an axe, sabre, dagger, and a large club terminating in the shape of a mace, they mount guard more especially near the king's person. Their number is about three or four hundred, and they are immediately known by their caps, which are bound round with Cachemire shawls. Ferradj Oula Khan, chief of the tribe of Efchars, and lord of the city of Zenghan, is the commander of this corps. He is a great friend to the French, and very much respected at court; he was intended at first to have been sent to France as ambassador, but a state intrigue deprived him of that mission, and substituted in his place a person

named Asker Khan, who is now in Paris. Besides the nasaktchis, the king also maintains a nearly equal number of mace-bearers, dressed in the same manner, but who carry an iron mace instead of an axe. The chatirs and ferrachs ought not to be considered as belonging to the military household; they are men attached to the domestic service of the prince; the following are their duties.

The chatirs are couriers who always precede the king, on foot, even on the longest journeys: their agility is such, that they run a march of several leagues without halting. They wear a very light dress, and a helmet of striped stuff, surmounted with plumes of various colours. I have read somewhere, that to be received as chatir, it was necessary formerly to run a space of thirty leagues in ten or twelve hours. This account may, perhaps, be taxed with exaggeration, for I have never heard of such a thing since I have been in Persia. Nevertheless it cannot be denied that the Persian couriers greatly surpass those whom the opulent amongst us used to have preceding their equipages. They are indefatigable: I have seen them several times at the head of the escort of Feth Ali Chah, when that prince returned from the country, and I can assert, that they were always forty or fifty paces at least in advance of his horse, which he rode at full gallop. This species of luxury, which could have been invented only by despots, to whom

the lives and health of their fellow creatures are as nothing, is, in my opinion, one of the most debasing to poor human nature : it is degrading mankind uselessly to the level of a running dog, and if formerly, as I believe to have been the case, we derived this custom and many others from the Orientals, we ought to congratulate ourselves, that without having entirely ceased to be ostentatious, it now no longer exists amongst us than as an object of parade, the folly and absurdity of which, will doubtless soon cause it to be totally abandoned.

The ferrachs are another kind of servants: their name, which proceeds from the Persian word *ferch,* a carpet, translated literally, would signify an upholsterer. Perhaps it denoted that employment originally; but it has no longer any thing in common with their actual functions.

The ferrachs, armed with long poles, march before the king, and with violent blows drive away the crowd that happen to impede his passage. Every one flies at their approach, and their very name inspires a kind of terror in the people. It is said that they are also the executioners of the king's justice, and that at the least sign* from

* The kings of Persia, like most of the Oriental monarchs, give their orders chiefly by signs called *ciharet.* These signs are almost imperceptible to those who are not acquainted with this custom. I remarked it at the last audience we had of the king: he had scarcely turned his head, when one of his officers placed a kalioun at his feet. I have still to learn how that officer, placed behind the throne, and at a considerable

his majesty, they make those who have been so unfortunate as to incur his displeasure, fall under their daggers. You would never have supposed that men who bore such a pacific name, were executioners: I give you this example as one of those in which it would not be proper to translate literally, and by their exact meaning in our language, the Oriental words; for it is not the first time I have remarked that, amongst these nations, the name is not always relative to the thing. Fortunately, as you are already informed, Feth Ali Chah is not a sanguinary prince, so that the ferrachs have not much occupation in his reign.

The vizirs and all persons of distinction have also their ferrachs, who march by their sides when they appear in public; but the latter are not so formidable to the people, as those of the sovereign: they do not strike so heavily, and the slow and regular gait of the Persian nobles, easily permits passengers to avoid them. In short, we also have our ferrachs, and these, as you may suppose, are the most gentle of all their brotherhood.

distance from it could have comprehended him. It must have been necessary carefully to study this kind of service, not to have been mistaken. In other respects, every thing may be understood by habit; but I believe that it is not without some danger to hold such an employment as the above under a cruel and capricious despot. The least error would be a crime, and might be expiated rather dearly.

The harem of the king of Persia, like that of the Grand Signor, is guarded by white and black eunuchs: but each are, I believe, less numerous and powerful than in Constantinople: nor have I observed that they obtain the same deference and respect here as in the latter capital. The black eunuchs alone can enter into the interior of the women's apartments; to the white is committed the care of the exterior gates. When the king's women go to the country, the eunuchs run over the plain in every direction, firing carbines loaded with ball, to drive the men from their road. Unfortunate would be the person who had not time to retire, for he would be killed without mercy; even the peasants themselves are forced to fly from their villages: if one be taken unawares, he has no other resource than to turn his back and stand up against a wall, or to lie down with his face to the ground, during the whole time that the dangerous cavalcade is passing, and he thinks himself very lucky if the eunuchs are satisfied with that mark of humility. It is but a short time ago that a friend and myself were near finding ourselves in that predicament. We had gone out to ride about the environs of Teheran, when musket shots fired at a distance on the plain excited our curiosity, and induced us to proceed to the quarter whence they came. Fortunately for us, our servants, who were natives of the country, had time to warn us, and prevent our committing an imprudence which would have been the more dangerous, as we were dressed in the Persian fashion, and consequently expected to know the customs of the country.

I shall address you but once more from Teheran, as I leave this capital towards the end of the present month, on my return to Constantinople. Several of the legation have been successively despatched before me; every thing induces me to believe that the mission of our ambassador approaches its conclusion, and that, in a short time, he will himself quit Persia. My route shall be the one by which I came, as far as Erzerum; and then, as much to avoid the great heats, as to change the scene, I shall proceed towards Trebizond and the Black Sea.

LETTER XXVI.

Persian Language and Literature.—The first Book of the Gulistan of Saadi.

Teheran, May 15, 1808.

I AM not sufficiently versed in the Oriental languages, to give you a complete treatise on Persian literature; it would be presumption on my part to undertake a task so difficult, after those who have gone before me, I can therefore only refer you to their learned works, and shall merely present you with some parts of the Gulistan of Saadi; it is all that my acquaintance with the language will permit, and also my first essay in the study of the Persian. I hope it may prove agreeable to you; but if I have presumed too much in offering this trivial tribute of respect, I trust that my zeal and the motives by which I am influenced, will induce you to excuse my temerity.

Saadi is one of the most esteemed of the Persian poets; he was a native of Chirac, and lived in the fourteenth century of our era, an epoch in which oriental literature was in all its splendor. You will sometimes meet capricious ideas in his writing, incoherencies, and a species of morality

which savours of the character of his nation, and the genius of his language; but you will also very often find a bold philosophy in his maxims, very remarkable for the time in which he wrote, and you may derive some reflections from his stories, in support of my observations on the manners and customs of the Persians. That which Saadi may be accused of, and not unjustly in my opinion, is a large portion of the self love and maudlin egotism which is but too often a failing of poets, whether ancient or modern. After having said in his preface, that the rose of gardens lasts but a moment; and that whatever is ephemeral merits no attachment, he adds: " I can compose for the instruction of all, a Gulistan,* of which the leaves shall withstand the autumnal winds; its eternal spring shall be exempt from the revolutions of the seasons, and the malignant influence of winter. Of what use is the rose? Pluck a leaf from my Gulistan; the rose will live but five or six days, and the existence of the Gulistan will be eternal." And further on: " This work will live during a great number of years; yet every part of my body will fall into dust. It is a picture which will remain after me, and of whose duration I am ignorant." Such language in an author's mouth would now be termed presumptuous pride; but we ought to excuse Saadi,

* Gulistan signifies a garden of roses, and may here be taken in the sense of a rose bush.

since his contemporaries have passed it over, and that it has appeared unimportant amongst the oriental writers.

Previous to entering on the subject, I think it necessary to acquaint you, that I have endeavoured to accommodate my translation to the genius of our language, to render it more intelligible, and to avoid the frequent repetitions which are found in my author. Wherever it has been possible to do so, without incurring the above fault, I have given it literally. Saadi's works are in prose interspersed with poetry: but as I do not aspire to any poetic talent you must be content with a prosaïc translation of his verses.

The preface or introduction to the Gulistan, sufficiently long in itself, turns in a great measure on the praise of God, that of Mahomet, and the prince who then reigned in Persia. I shall merely extract the passages which are remarkable for the imagery alternately stern or soft that it presents to us. They afford a fair specimen of the oriental style, as also of the most familiar figures of the Persian poets.*

* Nothing but the soundness of Saadi's morality, and the extraordinary applicability of his political maxims, (founded, as they are, on the immutable basis of truth), to the present state of Europe, would have induced the Editor to present his readers with an English version of these extracts. In thus apologizing to the critical world for an infringement on literary propriety that required some explanation, the Editor cannot help expressing an ardent hope, that aphorisms such as those contained in the GULISTAN, and which poet laureats of modern times would do well to inculcate, may be pointed out to the rulers and ministers of these eventful days: for they were never so truly in want of such salutary lessons as at this awful crisis, when the struggle of new principles, arising from an advancement in civilization and the progress of knowledge, against the barbarism and bigotry of the "olden time," threatens society with all the accumulated horrors of anarchy and bloodshed!

After an invocation to God, Saadi exclaims, still addressing himself to the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe, "He said to the morning breeze which embellishes all nature, spread out thy emerald carpet; to the beneficent clouds of spring, raise up those tender plants from the bosom of the earth. He has covered the trees with mantles of verdant foliage, such as the vestments worn at the Newrouz, and at returning spring crowned the young branches with chaplets of flowers. The juice proceeding from the sugar cane becomes from his goodness a delicious honey, and the kernel of the date he permits by cultivation to produce an elevated palm. Oh, man! the clouds, the winds, the sun, the moon and skies, all contribute to thy sustenance; but he wills that thou shalt not enjoy it indolently; all bow the head in expectation of thy orders! it would be unjust that thou shouldst be the only one who receivest no commands. . . . .

. . . .

"A devotee abstracted from all mundane

thoughts, in the chaos of an ecstasy, rested his head between his knees: when recovered from his meditations, one of his friends said jokingly to him, 'what hast thou gathered for us in this garden?' 'I fancied,' he replied, 'that I was opposite a rose-tree, and that I filled the skirt of my cloak with flowers, to present them to my friends. When I had nearly reached them, the perfume of the roses so overpowered me, that my gown slipped from my hands. Bird of the morning, learn what love is from the moth that flies to burn itself at the lamp; he has died without uttering a complaint. How can false devotees derive any benefit from their affectation, since those who have known God for a moment, never can behold him a second time."

Saadi next addresses some exaggerated praises to his sovereign, and is not very scrupulous in those which he gives to himself:

"All mankind, whether rich or poor, have joined with him in expressions of kindness to me, merely because the people are always of the same opinion with their sovereign. Since thy notice hath been attracted by thy wretched slave, the traces I leave behind me display a greater brightness than that of the sun. Even if all should be vice in the slave, any vice approved of by the prince becomes a virtue!

"Being one day at the bath, an odoriferous earth fell from a lover's hand into mine. 'Art thou musk, or yet amber,' I exclaimed, 'thou

whose delightful perfume enchants me?' 'I was nothing,' it replied, 'but a clay without value. I have been a moment with the rose, and it has communicated this sweet odour to me: were it not for that, I should have remained a common clay as heretofore.' . . . .

"One night, I reflected on past times, and I regretted bitterly the days of my life that I have mis-spent; the tears I shed relieved my mind, and I began to recite these verses which alluded to my situation. . . . .

"Oh, thou, who hast attained the age of fifty years, and who continually passeth thy life in indolence, avail thyself profitably of the five days which remain to thee! He who has left this world, without having rendered himself useful, is covered with shame; death struck the kettle-drum of departure, and he was unprepared. The morning's sleep, which refreshes the traveller from his fatigues, induces him to forget that he must continue his journey.

"The wise man never depends too much on life. The good and bad, all must die; he alone will be happy who has performed good actions. Make thy preparations beforehand to enter into the tomb, because no one will make them for thee. Life is like the snow which the sun of Temmouz (July) reduces to water, and yet man remains inactive! Oh thou who goest to market without money, I fear much that thou wilt return with an empty basket! He who consumeth his corn when

green, will be obliged to glean in harvest time. Suspend all the movements of thy soul, to hearken to the counsels of Saadi, thou becomest man, and thou diest. In this human life consists.

"After having profoundly meditated on those reflections, I resolved to withdraw from the world, and to impose an eternal silence on myself, to efface the vain works which I have written, and, in short, to renounce those frivolous discourses (the deaf and dumb who retires to a corner is preferable to him who has not the restraint of his tongue,) when one of my friends, with whom I had always lived, and who resided with me, entered as usual. So long as he limited himself to jokes and raillery, I made him no answer, and solely occupied in worshipping God, I did not even raise my head from my knees. He was vexed, and said, 'now that thou may'st do it, my dear brother, speak, for to-morrow, when the messenger of death shall announce thy last hour, thou wilt be really forced to open thy mouth.' Another friend informed him of the resolution I had taken to remain in adoration the remainder of my life, and of the perpetual silence I had just prescribed to myself; 'and thou also, if thou canst, bow thy head,' he added, 'and follow the path which leads to heaven.' 'I swear by the respect and friendship which have always united me to him,' the first replied, 'never to quit him for a moment, nor to take a single step, until Saadi shall have, as heretofore, delighted me with his

eloquent and precious speech; it is wrong to afflict friends, and nothing is more easy than to break such a vow. It is contrary to the laws of justice and wisdom that the sword of Ali remain in the scabbard, and the tongue of Saadi in his mouth. Of what advantage is thy tongue to thee, oh sage! if thou keepest it closed? If the door of the treasure of the virtuous man remain locked, who can divine whether it contains diamonds or iron? Though silence be a virtue in the eyes of the sage, still speech should be used when necessary. Two things are indicative of a weak mind, to be silent when it is proper to speak, and speaking when silence should be kept.' I could no longer remain silent, because it was a faithful friend who addressed this expostulation to me, one who had participated in all my griefs, at length I spoke.

"In the following spring, we went out one day, the severity of the cold was passed, and the happy season of roses had arrived. It was the first of Ardebehicht (May,) the nightingale warbled, perched on the highest branches; the pearly dew-drops scattered on the blushing rose, resembled tears on the cheek of an enraged beauty. My friend and I resolved to pass the night in his garden. The situation was charming, in the midst of a smiling landscape, the prospect of the trees excited an enchanting joy in the soul; it might have been said that the earth was covered with enamel, while the skies were sown with sparkling stars. It was

a garden of hyacinths of a thousand hues, in the midst of which meandered a limpid stream; it was an orchard abounding in all kinds of fruits, where the birds filled the air with their melodious songs. The breeze had spread under a refreshing shade, a variegated carpet, like the tints of the cameleon. When morning came, and that we must depart, in spite of our wish to stay, I saw my friend occupied in filling the skirts of his garment with roses, sweet basil, and hyacinths."

Such is the manner in which Saadi leads the reader on. He then says to his friend, that the garden rose exists but a moment, and that he can compose a Gulistan whose duration shall be eternal. He announces that at this assertion, his friend emptied the flowers he held in his habit, into his own, and that the Gulistan was terminated when the season of roses had passed. He concludes his preface with new praises to the king, and by maxims, such as the following:

"Several wise Indians said on the subject of Buzurdj Mihr, the vizir of Khousrew Nouchirewan, 'we know no other fault in him than that of being slow in his discourses, of delay in speaking, and of leaving his auditors too long in uncertainty.' Buzurdj Mihr heard them, and replied: 'I would rather reflect before speaking, than have to repent of what I had said.'

"Reflection should precede speech. Previous to the building of a wall, the foundation should be properly laid.

"Lokman was once asked, who taught thee prudence? 'The blind,' he replied, 'who never make a step without ascertaining the ground. To enter with safety, it is necessary to have previously come out.'

"Though the cock is valiant in the combat, what can he avail against the falcon with brazen talons? The cat is a lion in comparison with the mouse; he is but a mouse when compared with the tyger."

The Gulistan is divided into eight babs* or chapters. The first treats of the actions of kings; the second, of the manners of dervishes; the third, on the utility of moderation; the fourth, on the advantages of silence; the fifth, on love and youth; the sixth, on weakness and old age; the seventh, on the impressions of education; and the eighth, on the duties of society.

"Date. (It is Saadi who speaks.) It was in the year 656 of the Hegira, that I found the occasion favourable for giving these counsels. I spoke, commended myself to God, and departed."

First story. "It is related that a king having condemned one of his slaves to death, that unfortunate being, in a state of desperation, began to utter all kinds of abuse and invectives against the prince in a strange language, according to this maxim, that he who is on the point of quitting

* *Bab* in Arabic signifies literally a gate. I give the translation of the first *bab* only.

life, says all that he hath on his mind. 'What doth he say?' the king inquired. One of the vizirs, a man equally powerful and compassionate, replied, 'sire, he has just repeated this Arabic verse, *He hath restrained his anger and pardoned mankind.*' The king moved to pity, had already pardoned his slave, when another vizir who was an enemy of the former, exclaimed; 'men like us should always tell our prince the truth. This wretch has loaded your majesty with insolent and injurious revilings.' At this declaration the king turned about to him and said, I prefer his falsehood to the truth which you have told me; he had a laudable intention, and you have been instigated only by the desire of doing evil. The wise have said that a lie which has a good action for its object, is preferable to a truth which will produce misfortune,' &c."

Other maxims follow, the morality of which is nearly the same.

2nd. " A king of Khorassan saw Sultan Mahmoud Sebuktein in a dream, about a hundred years after his death. Every part of the body of that prince appeared to be dispersed and reduced to dust, excepting his eyes, which rolled in their orbits, and viewed him earnestly. The king summoned the seers and interpreters of dreams, none of whom could explain his vision. At length a dervish gave him this interpretation. 'He has not lost sight of his kingdom, since it has been in the possession of strangers. Many are the sages who have been consigned to clay, they are no longer themselves nor their greatness, and the earth has so consumed them, that their very bones have disappeared. The revered name of Nouchirewan lives still, though many ages have passed since the death of that worthy prince. Whoever thou art, oh, mortal, do good, and make thy life useful, before the terrible cry shall be heard, he no longer exists!' "

3rd. " A young prince naturally deformed, had, it is said, brothers who were both handsome and well shaped. One day, the king threw looks full of hatred and contempt on the former; the young prince was distressed at it, and said, 'Oh, my father, a wise man of small stature is preferable to an ignorant person though well made. Know you not what a very lean and learned man said one day to a fellow whose fatness and stupidity were co-equal: an Arabian horse even when foundered, is worth more than a stable full of asses!' His father smiled, the nobles applauded him, and his brothers became envious.*——So long as a man has not spoken, his faults and good qualities remain concealed. Think not that the cavern is empty, perhaps a tyger sleeps there.—Towards that time, a formidable enemy declared war against the king; when the two armies met, the deformed prince was the first to engage in

* The passages marked thus ——— are in verse in the original.

action, and shout the cry of war, 'thou shalt never see my back on the day of battle; but thou shalt see my head in the midst of carnage. He who fears not danger, *plays with his own blood* during the combat; he who takes a flight, on the contrary, *plays with the blood of the army.*' Saying these words, he rushed on the enemy, and overthrew many warriors. When he returned to his father, he humbly kissed the ground, and said, 'Oh thou, to whom I have appeared despicable, think not that strength is a virtue; a lean horse on the field of battle performs his duty better than an overgrown ox.' It is related that the king's troops were on the point of flying before an enemy far superior to them in number, when this young prince re-animated their courage by these words: 'Warriors! beware of deserving to be clothed in female habits!' This expression animated the soldiers with their original valour, they charged simultaneously, and it is asserted that they gained the victory. The king affectionately kissed his son on the forehead and eyes, placed him by his side, and loaded him with so many favours, that his brothers, inflamed with jealousy, resolved to poison him. His sister, who discovered it, warned him by tapping several times at his window, the prince understood her, and would not taste of the dishes which were served to him: 'it is not fit,' he said, 'that the virtuous man should perish, and the wicked take his place: no one would put himself under the protection of the

owl, if the phœnix were to disappear from the surface of the earth.' His father was informed of this affair, summoned his sons to his presence, reprimanded them severely, and exiled them by assigning to each a retirement, until they should change their sentiments, and that their jealousy was extinguished. It is said that two dervishes can sleep together on the same carpet, but that two kings cannot remain in the same nation. The religious man reserves the half of his loaf for the poor, whereas a king, when he has conquered a province, wishes still to overrun another."

4th. "A horde of Arabian robbers desolated a district; they had intercepted the road of the caravans, beaten the armies of the prince, and intrenched themselves on the summit of a mountain, which was made their retreat and asylum. The ministers of the kingdom assembled to consult on the means of stopping their ravages, supposing that if they should delay that measure, it would soon be impossible to resist those depredators. One man alone may easily pluck up the tree which has been recently planted; but if it has been left to take root, the force of a camel will no longer suffice. With a mere shovel a fountain may be stopped at its source; but, when it is become a river, an elephant can no longer pass it. It was determined that emissaries should be sent to watch the moment when the rebels would leave their cavern, to ravage the country: several able generals were at the same time placed in the

passes of the mountain. One night when the robbers returned from an expedition after burning a village, they laid by their arms, as usual, and deposited their booty. Their first enemy was sleep. Already had the sun replaced the shades of night, and Jonas re-entered the belly of the whale, when the brave warriors quitted their ambush, and tied the miscreants' hands behind their backs. On the following morning they were conducted to the presence of the king, who ordered them to be put to death. Amongst those villains was a young man scarcely arrived at maturity, and whose cheeks were yet only covered with a light down. One of the vizirs prostrated himself before the king, and said, 'this young man is without experience, his youth has been the cause of his being misled: I intreat your majesty to grant his pardon to your slave.' The king turned his head at first, and refused to accede to the prayer of this generous intercession.——Whoever does not follow the example of honest men, is of a bad disposition, the education given to the ill disposed, produces as little effect as a walnut for a cupola; it is necessary to cut down the last scion of the wicked, and extirpate the roots of their family. To extinguish a fire and forget to quench the embers, to kill a serpent and spare its young ones, is not the conduct of a prudent man.——If a cloud could scatter the rain of life, never would the branches of the willow be eaten. Beware of associating with the

worthless, for thou canst never extract sugar from a common reed. The vizir listened to these words with respect and submission, and though he was grieved to the soul, he could not avoid approving of their wisdom. He, however, added, 'that which has been said by the master of the earth's surface (whose reign be eternal,) would be the exact truth, if this young man had been born amongst the wicked, and that he had been totally corrupted; but your slave hopes that he will be improved in the company of worthy people, and that his manners will be softened, because he is still but a child; vice and ferocity are not rooted in him. It is seen in the Koran that all men come into the world with a disposition to Islamism, and that they subsequently do not become Jews, Christians or Guebres, but through the fault of their parents.' . . .

The courtiers supported the intreaties of the vizir so warmly, that the king, at length, pardoned the criminal, saying, 'I remit his punishment, though I do not perceive any great advantage from it.' Knowest thou that which Sal said to Rustem the Curde? 'Never suppose thine enemy feeble and without resources; I have often seen the water of a fountain scanty at its source, but at a distance it hath borne away a camel and its load.' The youth was led away, placed in the care of a learned tutor employed to educate him, to instruct him in eloquence, and in the art of serving kings, and to render him, at some future period,

worthy of his equal. One day the vizir had occasion to speak of his favourite to the king; he praised his good qualities and sense; asserted that his education had made him quite a different man, that his manners were entirely changed, and that he no longer retained any vestige of his former vices. The king smiled and said: 'The son of the wolf will end by becoming a wolf, even though he should be some day powerful amongst men.' A year or two passed. The young man ran away to join a gang of robbers, and so identified himself with them, that, at length, he murdered the vizir and his two children. In a moment he forgot all that he owed to his generous benefactor, rebelled and took the post which his father held amongst the robbers. The king *taking the finger of astonishment between his teeth*, exclaimed, 'How can a good sword be made of bad steel? The wicked can never become good by education. Oh, sages! rain, the advantages of which are denied by none, gives equal nourishment to the tulip in a garden, and the brambles of the marshes!—Hyacinths are not produced in a quagmire. Do not lose the fruits of thy toil. It is as criminal to do good to the wicked, as to injure worthy persons.'

5th. I saw the son of a serhenk* at the gate of the palace of Elhamil. This young man had great talents and penetration; it could be seen in

* *Serhenk*, is an officer attached to the service of kings.

his countenance that he would some day or other arrive at greatness.... At length the beauty of his face, and his wit attracted the notice of the Sultan. The wise have said, that true riches consist in virtue, and not in other wealth, and that wisdom is the fruit of the mind and not of years. His equals were jealous of him, accused him of treason, and in vain endeavoured to ruin him. How is it possible to destroy an enemy when his sovereign is his friend? 'What is then the cause of their enmity towards thee?' the king asked him one day. 'With the protection of your majesty,' he replied, 'I have satisfied all my equals, excepting the envious persons who will not be contented until you shall have withdrawn your favour from me. It is not in my power to afflict any one; but what can I do for the jealous man who invents misfortunes for himself? Perish, envious wretch; death alone can free thee from thy torments. The discontented man earnestly solicits place, and demands the degradation of the great as if a benefit to himself. If the bat sees not in open day, is it the fault of the sun? Oh thou! who art an advocate for virtue, thou knowest that it were better a thousand similar eyes should be deprived of sight, than that the sun were obscured.'

6th. 'It is related that a king of Persia having despoiled his subjects of their property, and treated them with violence and cruelty; to avoid oppression and tortures, the greater part emigrated

to foreign countries. When the country was deserted, the produce of the earth failed, the treasures of the king were exhausted, and the enemy, delighted, conquered his states. Tell him who asks assistance of thee when he is unfortunate, to be generous when he may be in prosperity. If thou dost not treat thy slave well, he will fly from thee; do so much good, that the freeman shall render himself thy slave. There was read one day to the king of whom I have spoken, the chapter of the Chah Namé,* which treats of the fall of Zabak, and of the reign of Feridoun.† One of the vizirs inquired, how Feridoun, who had neither treasures, nor kingdom, nor courtiers, could have contrived to arrive at supreme power? The king replied, that the people assembled around him, and assisted him to ascend the throne. Since, then, he owed the throne to the people, continued the vizir, why has your majesty obliged your subjects to fly from your dominions? Apparently you do not desire to preserve the crown. He alone is worthy, who provides well for the subsistence of his people, for the sovereign is chief of his army. What are then the means of assembling the soldiery? the

* The Chah Namé of Ferdousi is the most voluminous poem that exists. It is a history of Persia full of fables, and embellished with all that an oriental imagination can invent of what is marvellous.

† Feridoun, the son of Djemchid, was placed on the throne by the people, after the fall of the usurper Zabak, or Dehbahkt.

king inquired. 'A king,' replied the vizir, 'ought to be generous and clement, if he desires that a solicitude to serve and defend him be displayed; and those virtues, sire, are unknown to you. Injustice can no more sustain a king, than the wolf can become a shepherd. An unjust prince saps the foundations of his own throne.' The king was displeased with the advice of the vizir, and, in a rage, sent him to prison. This vizir had a son, who took arms immediately; the nation, wearied by tyranny, joined the youth, and offered to support him. The king was then obliged to descend from the throne, and the son of the vizir took his place. A violent and unjust king will be abandoned by his subjects, and, sooner or later, lose his power. Render thy people happy, and thou shalt enjoy repose, even during war, because the people are the real army of a just king.

7th. A king happened to be in a ship with a slave, who saw the sea for the first time. This unfortunate man, who did not consider himself in safety, wept, groaned, and trembled in all his limbs; the very efforts made to tranquillize him, were unavailing: the king, at length, lost patience. A sage, who had embarked in the same vessel, said to the prince, 'if your majesty should order me, I can readily find means to silence this fellow. 'You will render me a great service,' the king replied. The sage caused the slave to be immediately thrown into the sea, let him swallow a certain quantity of water, had him afterwards drawn out by the hair, and

brought on board the ship. The slave seated himself in a corner, and said no more. The expedient of the philosopher pleased the king, who could not, however, avoid inquiring of him, what there was so wise in his conduct. The following was his reply: 'this unhappy man was not in a state to appreciate the advantages of a ship, because he had never fallen into the sea. Now that he has learned it, he will be tranquil and contented!—Oh thou who art satiated, thou despisest a barley loaf; that which is disdained by thee, is the object of all my wishes. The *azaff** would be hell for the houries of paradise; but interrogate the damned, and they will tell you that the *azaff* is paradise.

8th. It was asked of Hormouz† what crimes the vizirs of his father had committed, that he had thrown them into chains: 'I know not of any particular crime,' he replied; 'but I have perceived that they were little inclined to respect me, and that they had no confidence in my youth. I feared they might have conspired against my life, and I have followed this philosophical counsel. Oh sage! fear him who fears thee, otherwise he will destroy thee in the combat. See the cat, when he has no longer any hope of escape, he tears out

* The *azaff* is, according to the Mahometans, a wall which separates paradise from hell.

† Hormouz IV. or Hormizdas, son of Khousrew Nouchireran (Kosroes the Great), a prince as vicious and cruel, as his father had been great and virtuous.

the tiger's eyes with his talons; so also the serpent coils around the shepherd's feet, fearing lest he should crush his head with a stone.

9th. A king was old and sick. An express arrived announcing, that, with God's help, his army had taken a fortress, and made a great number of prisoners. 'This is not good news for me,' he replied. 'For whom then is it?' the messenger inquired. 'For my enemies, that is to say, for my heirs. Alas! I have passed my whole life in the hope that all my desires would be accomplished; my wishes are realized, but what benefit have I obtained from them, since I cannot hope to regain my past time! The hand of death has struck the signal of departure on his drum: oh, my two eyes, take leave of my head! oh, palms of my hands! oh my shoulders! oh my arms! say all of you farewell to each other. The enemy of happiness, death, is fallen on me. Oh my friends! ye will all make this passage! I have spent my days in ignorance, and I have not been conscious of it. Think well of this!'

10th. I was in a meditation near the tomb of Jahia, in the mosque of Damascus, when an Arab king, notorious for his injustice, came to the temple, and began to pray and request many favours.—The poor and the rich are slaves in this world, and the rich are those who have most wants—'Since it is the duty of dervishes,' said he, 'join thy prayers to mine, that I may be freed from a formidable enemy.'—It is a crime

for a powerful and strong man to oppress the weak. Let him fear those who pardon not the fallen, because if in his turn he should fall, no one will assist him.——He is wrong who has sown the kernel of malice, and who expects from it good fruit. Open thine ears to the people who demand justice of thee; for if thou refusest it to them, the day of retribution will arrive!

11th. There appeared in Bagdad a dervish whose prayers were always fulfilled; Yousouf Hadjadj ordered him to be brought to him and said; 'Address a prayer to heaven for my prosperity.' 'Oh Lord, receive his soul!' the dervish immediately said. 'In the name of God, what prayer is that?' exclaimed Yousouf. 'I have made it for thy good, and for that of all Mussulmen,' the devotee replied,—'Oh, thou who in an elevated rank makest thine inferior suffer, how far wilt thou thus proceed? What benefit is it to thee to torment men's minds? Thy death is far preferable to the calamities of mankind.'

12th. A king well known for his injustice, inquired of a dervish what was the best prayer that he could offer up to heaven: this was the answer he received from him; 'Pray to the Lord to grant thee *sleep* during one half of the day, because that then thou canst not torment thy people.——I have seen a villain sleep the half of the day, and I said, this man is the scourge of the people; therefore it is better that he should sleep.'

13th. A king who had passed the night in debauchery, amused himself in reciting these verses:—'In all my life I have never had a happier moment; I had then neither cares nor vexations.' A dervish*, destitute of clothing, happened by chance to be lying under the window of his apartment; he heard him, and exclaimed:—'Oh thou whose happiness exceeds that of all mortals, thou hast no cares, I agree, but have we not some?' The king wished to give him a thousand pieces of gold, and called to him from the window, to hold out his habit and receive them. 'How shall I hold out my skirt, when I have no clothes?' the poor man replied. The king then added a pelisse to this sum. The dervish soon spent that money, and returned to the same place.—Wealth cannot long remain in the possession of a pious man, no more than patience in the hearts of lovers, or water in a sieve.—The king, who thought no more of him, was very angry at seeing him again. It is said, that wise and prudent men usually beware of the violence and rage of kings, because the latter being generally occupied in important affairs of state, cannot bear with the importunity of ordinary persons. Never will he obtain favours of a sovereign, who knows not how to seize a proper opportunity. When thou seest one moment unfavourable for thy request, do not expose

* Dervish or Dervise, literally signifies a beggar.

thyself uselessly to an affront.——'What,' said the king, 'has this wretch been able, in such a short time, to spend so large a sum?' 'Who does not know,' the dervish replied, 'that the public treasure is the lot of the poor, and not the prey of the agents of hell?'——He who lights his lamp during the day, will lack oil for the night. ——One of the vizirs, a sensible man, said to the prince, 'my lord, it appears to me that it would be more advantageous to give the means of existence in small portions to persons of this class, in order that they may not lavish money in useless expenses: the order which your majesty has given to drive away this wretch, is unworthy of a king who ought to be the father of his people, and it is equally inconsistent with your dignity to deprive him now of all hope, whom at first you had led to expect a large fortune.——Thou wilt never perceive pilgrims assembled around a well of brackish water; wherever a spring of sweet water is to be found, thou shalt see, on the contrary, men, birds and ants eagerly gathered about it.'

14th. It is related that a king who studied the happiness of his subjects, yet treated his soldiers with severity which bordered on cruelty. A powerful enemy having attacked his dominions, he was abandoned by the latter.——If soldiers be stinted in their pay, they will refuse to fight. ——One of those who had deserted the king's army, and who was my friend, replied thus to the

reproaches I made him, for having betrayed his ancient master: 'Put yourself in my place, what will become of me when my horse is without food, and my saddle pledged? The prince who is avaricious in his treatment of soldiers, will never induce them to expose their lives in his service.—— Be generous to the soldier, if thou desirest that he should risk his head for thee.'

15th. A vizir having been deposed, turned dervish, and habituated himself so much to a religious life, that he at length became quite reconciled to it. A short time afterwards the king changed his opinion of him, and offered him a new place, which he refused. 'I have experienced in my own case,' he replied, 'that obscurity is preferable to greatness. He who will be content with a happy tranquillity, has nothing to fear from the dog's tooth, nor from the tongue of man; he has torn the paper and crushed the pen of criticism, and he no longer fears the censure of his species.'

16th. Some one asked the karakal,* why he had chosen to keep company with the lion. 'In order,' replied the latter, 'to feed on the remains of his prey, and to live under his protection safe from the attacks of my enemies.' 'Why,' it was added,

* Karakal kara koulak, or sea kouch, in Persian, is a kind of lynx or jackal, which always follows the lion's track, and lives, it is said, on the remains of his meals. This animal is very common in Persia; it is the lynx of the ancients.

since thou hast placed thyself under his protection, and that thou boastest so greatly of his generosity, dost thou not approach nearer to him? thou couldst then make thyself distinguished in the crowd of his courtiers, and be remarked as one of his most faithful slaves?' 'By acting thus,' he replied, 'I should no longer be safe against his anger.'——If the Guebre were to preserve the fire even for a hundred years, he yet would burn himself if he were to fall into it for a single moment. It is said with reason that courtiers amass wealth to-day, and to-morrow they lose their lives. Remember this advice of the wise. Beware of the caprice of kings, because they may perhaps take offence from a mark of respect, and clothe thee with dresses of honour for a want of attention. If flattery be a virtue, in a courtier, it is a crime in a sage. Take every care to preserve thy reputation and credit, and leave flattery and meanness to those who surround kings.

17th. One of my friends complained to me of the hardness of the times: 'I have scarcely wherewithal to live,' said he, 'and I have a numerous family to support. Oppressed with misfortunes, I have often had the idea of going into other countries, in order to live there unknown, and that no one should be acquainted with my face.'—Many persons have gone to sleep fasting, without its being known to any one. Others have died of starvation, and not a tear shed for them.—I have

since reflected on the joy that my enemies would experience at seeing me depart; I have thought that in my absence they would loudly blame my conduct, that they would call my anxieties for my family inhumanity, and would say, see that barbarous man, he is not worthy of happiness, he thinks of nothing but his own ease, and he abandons his wife and children. I have some knowledge of arithmetic; if, through your influence, you could obtain for me a petty employment, I should be the happiest of mankind, and you would inspire me with eternal gratitude.' 'Oh, my brother!' I replied, 'the elevated station of a king has two sides, hope and fear. The hope of life and the fear of death; it would be madness to fall from hope into fear.*——No one will enter the poor man's cottage to demand of him the taxes on his land or his garden. Endeavour to bear with extortion and tyranny, or else leave thy liver to be preyed on by ravens.'——'These observations,' my friend replied, 'have no connection with my situation, and are not an answer to my request. I know as well as you that a peculator trembles when he has to give on his accounts; but integrity is pleasing to God, and I have never seen any one lose himself in the paths of virtue. According to the wise four kinds of persons fear for others; that is, the rebel, his

* A very fine and philosophical maxim, certainly; but which would not meet with much success in our days.

sovereign; the thief, his jailor; the wicked, the attorney general; and a profligate, the censor. But he who has never deviated from rectitude, can he be afraid of rendering his accounts? ——Do not pique thyself on thy honours, if thou wouldst not be annoyed by thy enemies in adversity. Let thy heart be always pure, my brother! and thou needest not fear any one. The laundress beats the linen which is to be washed against the stone.' I replied to him with the story of the fox, which, running away in full speed, met some one who inquired what had happened to him; 'it is desired,' he answered, 'to employ the camels in hard labour.' 'Fool that thou art,' it was said to him, what similitude is there betwixt the camels and thee? 'Hold your tongue,' the fox added; 'for if some envious person were to say, with an intention of injuring me, that I am a camel, I should be seized, and who would trouble himself about my deliverance? who would claim me?' Before the theriaca of Yrac was introduced, a man bitten by a serpent would have had time to die. 'As to thee, my friend, thou hast really abilities, religion and probity; but calumniators are lying in wait, rivals and envious persons are ever ready. In spite of thy virtues, they will depict thee as an immoral man, thou shalt be exposed to the anger of thy king. Who will then dare to interest himself in thy fate? I advise thee, therefore, to remain in mediocrity, and not to interfere in affairs of state.

——The sea, undoubtedly, presents innumerable advantages; but all the world will tell thee, that true happiness is on the land.' My friend listened to this discourse with a discontented air; he replied to me with much sourness: 'What wit! what competency! what knowledge and penetration! It is only when in prison, say the wise, that we know our friends; at table, on the contrary, enemies may be mistaken for friends. There was reason to say, do not consider as thy friend, he who, in thy prosperity, fatigues thee with vain protestations of attachment and fraternity. He alone merits that name, who runs to extend his hand towards thee when thou art in misfortune.'——Seeing that he would not absolutely change his intention, and that my advice seemed to be dictated by hatred, I at length went to a great nobleman with whom I kept up an old intimacy; I explained to him the circumstances of the person for whom I interested myself, and requested he would procure a small employment for him, which he soon obtained. In a short time he distinguished himself by his talents, and merited the greatest praise. He succeeded by degrees to other posts still more eminent and honorable, and was so favored by fortune, that the prince himself attached him to his person. Full of joy at his success, I hastened to congratulate him on it, and recited these verses to him. ——Never despair in adversity; patience is bitter,

but its fruits are very sweet.——At that time, several persons proposed that I should join them in a pilgrimage to Mecca. On our return from the journey, my friend came out to meet me, two posts from the city. Every thing in his appearance announced wretchedness and misfortune, and I expressed my astonishment to him. 'That which you predicted to me has happened,' he said. 'I created a crowd of envious persons, who accused me of having betrayed the king, and he has not even taken the pains to ascertain if I was culpable, none of my old and most intimate friends have dared to speak in my favour, I have been abandoned by all the world.——When it pleaseth God to overturn one of his creatures, all men crush his head.——In short, I have suffered all kinds of calamities; I have been despoiled of my patrimony, and it is only since I heard of your happy arrival from your pilgrimage, that I have been liberated from prison.' 'Thou wouldst not follow my advice formerly,' I replied: 'I warned thee that the service of kings, like the sea, presents dangers and advantages, whence either thou shalt derive treasures, or be swallowed up by the waves.——Either the navigator returns laden with gold, or the sea throws his carcase on the shore.'——I saw no necessity for further reproaches to this poor man, it was useless to plunge him into despair, and I limited myself to the recital of these two verses to him.——Knowest

thou, Oh, mortal, that thou shalt be overwhelmed with misfortunes, if thou closest thine ear against the advice of thy fellow-creatures. If thou hast not the strength to bear the pricking of a needle, do not thrust thy finger into the scorpion's nest.

18th. Several dervishes of my acquaintance, whose exterior and conduct indicated piety, attracted the attention of a nobleman of distinction, who conceived a very favorable opinion of them, and granted them pensions. A short time afterwards, it happened that one of those devotees committed a dishonorable action, the rich man now lost the esteem which he had for the whole party, and withdrew his favours from them. In the hope of restoring to my friends the means of existence, of which they had been deprived by the fault of one member, I went to their former patron, to intercede for them; but his porter refused me admittance, and I consoled myself in recollecting these words of the philosopher.——The gate of the nobleman, the vizir and the sultan, never opens to him who goes without presents. When the dog and the porter attack the stranger, one of them seizes his collar and the other the skirt of his coat.——The servants of this nobleman having learned who I was, introduced me afterwards with great honours, and he himself wished to treat me with much distinction; full of humility, I did but the more humble my-

self, in saying to him, when the *Kahabé** became the general house of prayer, people came from the most distant countries to visit it; thus it is that you should listen to the prayers of my companions, because I will not throw a stone against a tree without fruit.

19th. The son of a king having inherited considerable treasures after the death of his father, employed them in liberal actions, and distributed innumerable benefits to his subjects and to his soldiers.——Aloe wood enclosed in a box, delights not the smell: that amber may emit its perfume, it must be thrown into the fire. Be generous with thy riches, because, in order to reap, it is necessary to sow.——One of the counsellors of the prince thought it his duty to caution him that his predecessors had amassed that wealth with much difficulty, and that they had always reserved it for their own necessities. Beware, said he to him, of being so prodigal, times may change, your enemies may avail themselves of your embarrassments, and you will then have nothing.——If thou scatterest thy gold over all the world, thou wilt not find even a grain of corn in time of need.——The king was offended at this discourse, and expelled his counsellor, saying: the Almighty in placing me at the head of this kingdom, required that I should be generous; he has given

* The *Kahabé* is the House of Abraham at Mecca.

me means of subsistence, and he does not intend that I should be niggardly. Haroun had forty treasures when he died, but Nouchirevan still lives, because he left a venerated name.

20th. It is said that Nouchirevan when hunting one day, ordered that a head of game should be roasted; as there was no salt, he sent one of his slaves to seek it in a neighbouring village. 'Pay for that salt,' he said: 'I do not choose that any one should acquire the habit of robbing the poor, and that the peasants suffer by my presence.' 'This village will not be ruined by such a trifle,' said several nobles. 'The commencement of oppression is but trifling,' the king replied, 'but by degrees, it at length ruins the world.——The wicked dies, but the maledictions of the people survive him. If the king should pluck an apple in the garden of his subject, his slaves tear up the tree. The prince who would take but five eggs, would soon see his soldiers kill a thousand hens with their swords!

21st. I have heard a story related of an unjust vizir, who despoiled the subjects, to augment the treasures of the prince, forgetting this wise maxim, ——Whosoever to please one only, fears not offending God, shall soon be punished; God will send some one to cut the thread of his days.——The lion is the king of animals, and the ass is the most inferior; and yet, the ass laden with his pack, is worth more than the lion which tears man in pieces.——The poor ass though lacking

sagacity, is valuable from the services it renders to man. I should prefer an ox or ass laden, to a bad man.——But, to return to the history of the vizir. It is said that the king being instructed of the oppressions of his minister, ordered him to be punished, and commanded that he should undergo a thousand tortures.——Think not to satisfy a sovereign, if thou dost not render his subjects happy. If thou wouldst be pardoned by God, do good to God's people.——A man who had more particularly suffered by the cruelty of the vizir, passed by chance before him, whilst he was suffering his punishment; he addressed him in these words:——'All who are powerful cannot extort with impunity from others, by virtue of their power. A bone may be thrust into the throat, but when it enters the bowels, it tears them.'

22d. A wicked man who had risen in life, threw a stone at the head of a philosopher. The latter, incapable of revenging himself, picked up the stone and preserved it until it should be required. It happened that a short time afterwards the king withdrew his favour from the bad man, and confined him in prison. The philosopher then went to seek him, and in his turn threw the stone at him. 'Who art thou, and why dost thou commit this injury on me?' the other inquired. I am such a one, he replied, and this stone is the same which at such a period thou threwest at my head. 'Where hast thou been since that time?' added the

bad man.——'I feared thee much when thou wert in place; but the moment that I saw thee in chains, I thought I ought to seize the opportunity to revenge myself.'——When a wicked man is prosperous, it is wise to give way to him; it would then be dangerous to contest matters. Any man who opposes merely his arm to a sword, runs the risk of losing his arm. Wait patiently to avenge thyself, until time shall enchain the hand of the wicked, and then satisfy thy friends and self by lowering his head.

The twenty-third story is given in a note to the fifteenth letter.

24th. One of the slaves of Amrou Leis having run away, he was pursued and brought back. A vizir who detested him, ordered that he should be put to death, that he might serve as an example to others. The slave prostrated himself before Amrou, saying: 'All that may be done to me, my lord, will be conformable to justice, from the moment that you command it. What can a slave do? His master has a right to dispose of his life. Yet, as I have been maintained in your house, I do not wish that at the day of judgment you should be accused of having unjustly shed my blood. Order me to kill your vizir, and then you may cause me to be led to punishment, to suffer a penalty of retaliation, but you will not have to accuse yourself for an act of injustice.' The king smiled and asked the vizir, what do you think I ought to do? 'Sire,' the minister replied, 'I

think you ought to set this man at liberty, to save me from a great misfortune, and because he is innocent.' I perceive that I have not followed this counsel of the sage: it is presumptuous to fight against cross-bowmen, when we know not how to handle our arms. When thou hast fired thine arrow against thine enemy, recollect that thou art become the object of his.

25th. King Zevzen had a treasurer of a disposition equally noble and generous; never did he miss an opportunity of serving his equals in his interest with the king, when they were present, and of speaking well of them in their absence. This minister, by chance, committed an action which displeased his sovereign; his property was confiscated, and himself loaded with chains. The officers who had charge of him, and who were all attached to him by gratitude, did not forget his former favours, and allowed him every kind of indulgence, instead of treating him with cruelty, as is the custom in prisons. If thou wouldst live in peace with thine enemies, do good in public to those who try to injure thee in thy absence. Nothing impedes the tongue of the slanderer; to prevent him from harming thee, it is necessary that thy kindness should deprive him of the means. Not having been able to satisfy the demands of the king, the treasurer remained long in prison. A foreign prince wrote to him, that his sovereign not having appreciated the great qualities of a nobleman like him, and having

treated him in such an unworthy manner, he was very solicitous for his deliverance, and invited him to enter into his service; that he should have reason to be satisfied with it, be promoted to the most distinguished stations, and that the nobles of his kingdom already rejoiced in the hope of seeing him arrive. This prince, at the same time, requested him to send an answer. On the receipt of this letter, the treasurer reflected on the greatness of his danger, and replied in a few words on the back of the same letter. A courtier who was informed of it, went to accuse him to the king, of holding a correspondence with his enemies. The king, irritated, desired to ascertain the fact, ordered that the courtier should be arrested, and read the letter. The treasurer replied to the foreign prince, that he had conceived an opinion of him far beyond his merits, and that besides he ought not to accept his offer, most honourable as it was, because that having lived on the bounty of the king his master, he could not, for a small pecuniary gain, change his sentiments towards his ancient benefactor.——Pardon him who has always been generous to thee, if it should happen that once in his life he had done thee an injury.—— The king, affected by such noble conduct, sent a kalahat (a dress of honour) to his treasurer, and personally asked pardon for his severity. 'I am guilty,' said he to him, 'of having punished an innocent person.' 'Sire,' the treasurer replied,

'I perceive no injustice in the conduct of your majesty; it was destined to be so. I had the misfortune to displease you; but I cannot complain of my punishment, as it proceeded from a hand which had loaded me with favours.' The wise have said: Do not afflict thyself for the evil done to thee, for neither good nor bad can come from the hand of man. Know that God alone makes friends and enemies, because it is God who is the only disposer of hearts. Since the arrow proceeds from the bow, the prudent man should beware of bending it.

26th. A king of Arabia one day said to his ministers: 'You will double the pensions of these people, because they are the most faithful servants of my throne, and the most assiduous in accomplishing my wishes; whilst my other slaves are flatterers, who are occupied only in frivolities, and who neglect their duties.' A devotee who heard these expressions, uttered a deep groan. 'What is the matter with you?' I asked him. 'All the slaves of God,' he replied, 'are equal at the foot of his throne. Whoever has passed two mornings in the king's service, will consent, without hesitation, to remain in it a third. The sincere worshippers of God, have hopes of going to heaven at some period, into the presence of the Lord. True greatness consists in submission to his orders. Refusing to obey him will alone be a cause of reproach.'

27th. It is related that an unjust prince had

bought wood of the poor, to sell to the rich at an exorbitant price. A pious man approaching him, said: 'Art thou a scorpion, that thou woundest these who go near thee, or yet, art thou an owl to ruin all places where thou stoppest? We are obliged to bear thy injustice, but know that nothing escapeth God. Do not oppress mankind, if thou wouldst not that they raise their complaints to heaven. The wicked man was offended at this language, and could not conceal his displeasure. A short time afterwards, his kitchens were on fire, which soon communicated to his storehouse for wood, and consumed all his property; when instead of a bed, nought remained to him but a heap of ashes. The same religious man happening to pass by, heard him exclaiming before his courtiers: 'I know not how this fire could have happened in my palace.' 'It was,' the dervish replied, 'a chastisement for thy cruelty to the poor.' Beware of oppressing the unfortunate, because that an afflicted heart will, sooner or later, find the means of revenge. Do not irritate a wounded mind, because a single complaint may totally overwhelm the world. Kosroes caused these words to be written on his throne. 'Of what use is a long life? what need have I of length of years, since one man may crush my head on the earth? Since wealth has passed through various hands before it came into my possession, so it may be transferred through other hands.'

28th. A wrestler had brought his art to such a

degree of perfection, that he knew three hundred and sixty different means of attacking his adversaries, and of which he employed a new one every day to overcome them. He had a particular esteem for one of his pupils, and taught him three hundred and fifty-nine of those feats, abstaining, for private motives, from instructing him in the last. The young man soon became so expert in wrestling, that none dared to oppose him, and he had the boldness to say one day before the king, that his master had no longer any superiority over him, than that of age and experience, but that he was inferior to no one in strength. The king, incensed at this language, required that they should oppose each other, and therefore ordered vast lists to be prepared, to which all the principal personages of the kingdom repaired. The pupil, like a furious elephant, darted into the area with such impetuosity, that he would have overturned a mountain of steel, if it had been in his way. As to his master, as he knew him to be stronger than himself, he made use, for throwing him, of the only trick which he had deemed proper to reserve for himself. The young man seized, without being able to disengage himself, was agitated, and the master, then raising him in his arms, threw him over his head to a great distance. A shout was raised, at the same instant, by all the assembly. The king granted a pelisse of honour to the master, and dismissed the pupil in disgrace, after

bitterly reproaching him for having dared to combat against a man to whom he owed his education, and for having failed in his rash enterprise. 'My lord,' the young man replied, 'it is not by his strength that my master has gained the present victory, but merely by this trick, which he had always refused to teach me.' 'I reserved it for a day like this,' the master exclaimed; 'because, the wise have said, give not too much power to thy friend, because, if he should at any time become thine enemy, he may resist thee effectually. Knowest thou that which an ungrateful pupil said once to his master: either gratitude no longer exists in this world, or else it is no longer practised. I have never taught the art of shooting arrows, that I might not, at any subsequent period, serve as a target to him.'

29th. A dervish was alone, on his knees, in a solitary place; the king happened to pass, and the devotee, whose ideas of happiness consisted in poverty alone, never raised his head, and did not even take notice of the prince. As pride is generally the inheritance of the great, the king was offended, and said, 'Really these dervishes are brutes: they have no ideas of duty and decorum.' 'Dervish,' said a vizir to him, 'the king of the earth is passing before thee, why hast thou not paid thy respects to him, and neglected those attentions which are due to him in such a case? 'Tell the king,' the religious man replied, 'that he may require obsequiousness from those who

expect benefits from him, and let him know besides, that kings are created for relieving the people, and not the people for rendering homage to kings!——The king is the guardian of the poor, and his beneficence alone can give lustre to his power. Sheep are not made for the shepherd, but the shepherd is made for serving them. That man whom thou seest to-day proud of his strength and prosperity, thou mayest see to-morrow plunged in misery. Wait a moment until his head, full of vanity, be reduced to dust; there will be no longer any difference between the king and the slave, when their course is run. Examine the ashes of a dead man, canst thou distinguish the poor from the rich?'——This discourse pleased the king. 'What can I do for thee?' said he to the dervish.——'I require nothing more than to leave me unnoticed.'——'Give me then, at least, some advice.'——'Know then,' said the dervish, 'that though now possessing all the riches in the world, power and wealth cannot always remain in thy possession.'

30th. A vizir went one day to request advice from Zeno the Egyptian. 'I am,' said he, 'occupied night and day in the king's service, and if I expect favours from my master, I also fear his anger.' Zeno wept, and replied to him; 'if I had feared God as much as thou dreadest thy king, I should be the greatest of saints.——If the hope of good and the fear of harm did not exist, the

prince would have one foot in heaven: and if vizirs were to fear God more than the king, kings would be angels.'

31st. A king having ordered an innocent person to be put to death, the latter addressed these words to him. 'Prince, beware that thy anger against me do not bring thee remorse! my punishment will last but a moment, but repentance for thy injustice will perpetually pursue thee.——The vicissitudes of life pass like the wind of the desert; pleasures and vexations, humiliations and honours have a termination.——Be it known to the villain whose victim I am, that the injury he has done to me, will always lie heavy upon him, whilst it merely passeth over me. The king, satisfied with these counsels, granted his pardon.

32d. The vizirs of Nouchirevan discussed amongst themselves some affairs of state; each was of a different opinion, and the king himself at length declared his own. Buzurdj Mihr was the only one who approved of it. 'What then have you found in the king's opinion so superior to those of so many sages?' said the other ministers to the king in private . . . . . 'Nothing,' he replied; 'but I prefer adhering to that of the king, even though evil should result from it; by coinciding with him, I shall at least be secured from his reproaches. '*He who does not think with the sovereign, washes his hands in his own blood. If the king should say in broad day that it is night, it*

is necessary to exclaim immediately, behold the moon and stars!'

33d. An adventurer had trimmed his horses, so as to make himself pass for a descendant of Ali.* I have arrived,' he said, 'from the pilgrimage to Mecca.' He presented to the king a copy of verses, of which he said he was the author. A courtier who had returned from a sea voyage, said; 'I saw this man at Bassora, during the Courban Bairam:† how could he have been one of the caravan to Mecca?' 'I have known his father, who was a christian,' said another; 'how can he be of the family of Ali?' At length, the verses, said by him to be his own composition, were found in the Divani Envar. 'What hath induced thee to utter such lies?' the king interrupted. 'Let him die, my lord,' replied the impostor: 'your slave must submit to all that you command, even though your orders should be unjust.' 'What dost thou mean?' the king rejoined. 'I know not,' he added, 'if your majesty be acquainted with verses:- —When a stranger brings thee sour milk, be assured that it contains

* It seems, according to this story, that the descendants of Ali had a peculiar manner of dressing their horses, in order to make themselves known.

† The Courban Bairam is the period when the pilgrims arrive at Mecca. The march of the caravan is calculated in such a manner as that they may make their entry into the holy city on the eve of that great festival.

two parts of water for one of milk; in the same manne , if some inconsiderate words have been uttered by thy slave, be not offended with him; the traveller is liable to lie'.*——The king smiling, said, 'thou hast never told a greater truth.' He then granted what he had requested, and pardoned him.

34th. It is related that a vizir who had been very kind to his friends, and who had been the mediator in all their differences, happened suddenly to lose the king's favour. His equals then used every means to obtain his liberation, and the officers who had charge of him, in his prison, far from subjecting him to any ill treatment, behaved with the utmost kindness and attention to him. The nobility of the kingdom, by dint of reminding the king of his former services, at length obtained his pardon. A dervish, who was informed of it, said on this subject;——'to assure thyself of the hearts of thy friends, sell thy patrimony. To feed respectable persons, burn the furniture of thy house. Do good to the wicked. It is necessary to stop the dog's mouth with a piece of bread.'

35th. One of the sons of Haroun El Raschid presented himself in a rage before that prince, saying that the son of a serhenk had insulted his mother.

* This phrase corresponds perfectly with our proverb, which is not, it is to be hoped, always justly applied; "He who comes from a distance, may lie at his leisure."

'How ought I to punish him?' Haroun inquired of the nobles of state. One said he merited death; another, that his tongue should be cut out: a third, that his property should be confiscated; a fourth, that he ought to be banished. 'It would be more generous,' said Haroun to his son, 'to pardon him: however, if you find that impossible, go and say abusive things to his mother; but take good care that you do not exceed the bounds I prescribe to the revenge; because in such case the injustice would be on your part, and the right on the side of your enemy.——A malicious person once uttered abuse against a worthy man, who heard it without emotion, and merely said; oh most respectable friend, I am worse than thou canst ever express, because I know all my failings, and that thou dost know them. He is not a man who would combat against a vigorous elephant; he alone is worthy of that name, who, feeling his anger rise, abstains from abusive language.

36th. One day I found myself embarked in a ship with several great noblemen, a boat happened to upset behind us, and two brothers were swallowed up in a whirlpool. One of the noblemen said to a sailor, 'if thou savest both, I will give thee fifty pence.' The boatman saved only one, the other was drowned. 'It seems,' said I to him, 'that his destiny was to die, since thou didst not give thyself the trouble to draw him out, and that thou hast given a preference to the other.

The boatman laughed, and thus replied to me: What you say is true in one respect, but you have not comprehended the motive of my conduct. What was it then? I asked him. I preferred saving this one, he replied, because when I once lost my way in the desert, he took me on his camel; whereas, on the contrary, the other often horsewhipped me in my childhood.——Avoid as much as thou canst, offending any one, because life is strewed with thorns. Compassionate the griefs of the unfortunate, for thou also shalt have thy calamities.

37th. I was acquainted with two brothers, one of them was employed in the king's service, the other earned his bread with the sweat of his brow. One day, the rich said to the poor brother, why dost thou not enter into the king's service, and free thyself from the hardships of labour? The poor man answered him; why dost thou not work, and free thyself from the shame of serving the sovereign?——The wise have said, to be seated and eat the bread earned by ourselves, is better than to wear a gilded girdle, and remain standing to serve others. I would prefer to stir up quicklime with my hands, than to attend with my arms crossed in the presence of a king. The precious time of life passes, by inquiring what shall I eat this summer? What shall I wear this winter? Oh, thou who art hungry, work to earn thy bread, instead of bowing thy back like a slave.

38th. Some one went to inform Nouchirevan the just, that God had delivered him from one of his enemies. 'Knowest thou,' replied that prince, 'if the Almighty will permit me to live long myself?—Are we then immortal, that we should rejoice at the death of our enemies!'

39th. The ministers of Kosroes were one day discussing state affairs near the throne; the principal vizir Buzurhember alone was silent. 'Why, my lord, do you not take part in our conferences?' the others inquired. 'Vizirs,' he replied, 'resemble physicians, the latter give medicines only to the sick: it would not, therefore, be wise in me to interfere in your conversation, while all you say is just and reasonable.—When I perceive that an affair does not require my advice, why should I intrude; but when I observe a blind man on the brink of a well, I should be criminal if I were not to warn him of it.'

40th. When the sovereignty of Egypt fell to the lot of Haroun El Raschid, far from acting like the impious wretch who, full of pride from the possession of that fine province, aimed at divine honours, he said, 'on the contrary, I would give this kingdom only to the meanest of my slaves.' Haroun had a negro named Khasib, whom he made king of the country. The latter had, it is said, so much wit and genius, that the Egyptian labourers having gone to complain to him, that by an unseasonable inundation they

had lost the crop of cotton which they had sown on the banks of the Nile, he replied to them, 'Why did ye not sow wool? so long as the lamb grows, ye are sure of gathering it.' A religious man of good sense, who was present, began to laugh, observing: 'If the good things of this world were to be adjudged to merit, the ignorant would fare badly.——The ignorant are so happy, that the wise are astonished at it.——Wealth and power are given to the wise only through the favour of heaven. It often happens in this world that the ignorant is honoured, and the learned degraded; the chymist dies in pain and vexation, whilst the fool enriches himself on his ruin.'

41st. There was a Chinese girl brought to a king one day, whom in his intoxication, he wanted to violate. The maiden having resisted him, the enraged monarch delivered her to an Ethiopian negro, whose lower lip hung down to his breast, whilst the upper extended beyond his nose. The aspect of this man would have frightened the deserts of China, and his pestiferous breath was worse than a fountain of bitumen. You might have said that at the day of the creation, ugliness had been stamped on his face, as beauty was on that of Joseph. Some historians have said of this man, that he was such a horrible object, that his ugliness could not be described, and that his breath (God preserve us!) could only be compared to the stench of a carrion exposed to the sun

in the midst of summer.*——It is said that he was not master of his passions, and the young Chinese became his wife. Next morning, the king having sought the girl, and not finding her, the adventure of the preceding night was recounted to him; he was so much enraged at it, that he ordered the hands and feet of the negro and the young girl to be bound, and that they should be thrown from the top of the palace into a deep pit. A vizir, who was a compassionate man, prostrated himself before his sovereign. 'The poor negro,' said he, 'is not guilty; all your slaves are accustomed to the generosity and favours of your majesty.'——'If he had waited but one night,' the king replied, 'what trouble could it have been to him? I would then have given him much more than the value of this girl.' 'Sire,' the vizir rejoined, 'the orders you give are executed immediately. Have you forgotten these words of the sage: think not that a furious elephant can prevent a man with burning thirst from approaching the fountain which may restore him to life; neither suppose that when placed before a table full of provisions, the irreligious man thinks of the ramazan.'——This discourse satisfied the king. 'I pardon the negro,' said he, 'but what shall I

* I ask pardon of my more gentle readers, but these words are the literal translation of this passage!

do with the girl?' 'She should be given to this slave,' said the vizir; 'as he has already possessed her, she is fit for him only.'——It is truly said, that friendship should not induce thee to approve of the faults of thy friend. He who is thirsty can never resolve to drink water, when half of it has been drunk by a filthy mouth. Shall the prince's hand pick up the orange which is fallen on a dunghill! He who is desirous to drink, will refuse it from a vessel which has been soiled by impure lips.

42d. Some one asked Alexander the Great, 'how did you contrive to seize on the nations of the east and of the west, when that conquest was always impossible to ancient kings, more potent than you in treasures and armies?' This was his answer: 'With the assistance of the Almighty, I have never desolated the inhabitants of the countries that I conquered; I have never despoiled them of their property, and I have always done honour to the name of kings.——The sage desires not the elevation of him who degrades the great.——The throne, fortune, power, liberality and poverty, are nothing, since they pass away so quickly. Do not suffer the names of those who leave this earth to fall into oblivion; when they are dear to mankind, they should live for ever. ——It is better to leave a good reputation than a gilded palace.——

I might quote a great number of other stories,

which would fully prove to you that with regard to maxims, the orientals have been our first masters, and that, in this respect, our best moralists have borrowed and still frequently borrow from them.

I shall now occupy myself entirely with preparations for my speedy departure; and shall, no doubt, have something to add to my former observations on the countries through which I have already passed; I therefore intend to make a point of communicating all that may be likely to interest you in the course of my journey.

LETTER XXVII.

Departure from Teheran—Second Journey to Kasbinn—Interior of a Harem—Return to Tauris—Stay at the Camp of the Chah Zadé Abbas Mirza—French Officers in the Service of the King of Persia—New Troops disciplined in the French Manner—Audience of the Prince—Presents, &c.

Camp of Abbas Mirza, near Tauris, June 10, 1808.

I LEFT Teheran on the 23d of last month, accompanied by another person of the legation. We had, according to custom, received a kalahat from the king, and took leave of the Grand Vizir, Mirza Muhammed Chefi; a mehmander of the household of Feth Ali Chah is appointed to attend us to the frontiers of Persia, and to avoid the prying observation of the inquisitive, we have assumed the Persian dress for the whole of this journey.

During the first four days, we continually met numerous troops of cavalry covered with brilliant armour, who had assembled from all quarters, to form the camp of Sultanié, where the king was to be on the 15th of June. We arrived at Kasbinn on the 27th of May, in the morning. Mehrab Khan, the governor of that city, who had received the ambassador so well on our former journey, thought he might use less

ceremony with two travellers of our description He received us at first very politely at his house then ordered his nazir or steward, to procure a proper lodging for us in the city, and to supply all our wants, meaning that it should be at our own expense. We therefore followed the nazir, who, after a long walk in the town, at length offered us for our quarters, a little shop of the bazar which happened to be vacant. We did not think proper to accept his offer, and returned to the khan; at whose desire, we shewed the king's firman, with which we were provided, explaining to him that though we were not ambassadors, we were at least the guests of his highness, and that it was indecorous that in a large city, so happy as to have such a governor, strangers should be exposed to the curiosity of the populace in the midst of the bazar.

The khan now promised to order his impertinent nazir to be bastinadoed, and offered us a lodging in his own house. We refused this, from a fear of giving trouble, or of being ourselves incommoded by the curious; he then caused us to be conducted by the kalenter of the city, Mirza Hassan, to a new house, where he exerted himself to satisfy all our wishes, and induce us to forget the trifling inconvenience we had suffered.

Here, for the first time, I have had the good fortune to be able to contemplate a Persian lady without interruption; but this was only for the

short space of a few minutes. From the terrace of our house, there was a view of the interior of a harem, and we discovered a young beauty there shining in all the charms of youth! she was covered with diamonds, and wore a blue Cachemire shawl on her head, the folds of which falling gracefully on her shoulders, intermixed with her beautiful hair. Only think of the effects of Persian jealousy; it was absent but a moment; for on the attendants perceiving that our attention was constantly turned towards the blessed spot, the consoling object was immediately withdrawn from our view.

Full of the pleasing ideas inspired by such a sight we left Kasbinn the next morning. During the whole of this day's journey and the following, we met a great many Turcomans with their families and flocks; they were going to pitch their tents in the neighbourhood of Sultanié. These wandering tribes may be considered the purveyors and victuallers of the royal camp; as they sell their milk and other commodities there, reserving for themselves merely what is necessary for their own subsistence.

A nasaktchi of the chah zadé Abbas Mirza, who was going as a courier to Teheran, informed us, near Sultanie, that the prince had already left Tauris, and that we should find his camp pitched at the gates of that city. We also met a caravan of pilgrims proceeding to Mechhed

in Khorassan, to the tomb of the Iman Mehdi*, for whom the Persians have a great veneration. At length we arrived at Tauris, on the 6th of June, after having rested at Zenghan, where we were lodged in a harem, from which the women had been sent. We passed successively through Herman Khané, Akkend, Miana, Turkmann and Tikme-tash, all which places I have already described.

On the day of our arrival at Tauris, we were presented in the afternoon to the grand vizir Mirza Buzurk, for whom we had letters of recommendation. This minister requested us to delay our departure for some days, as he wished us to take charge of several despatches. We consented to it with the more pleasure, as we have found some of countrymen here, and new objects well worthy of attention.

The French officers in the service of the Chah Zadé Abbas Mirza are two in number, M. Verdier, captain of infantry, and M. Lamy, captain of engi-

* The Imam Mehdi is the twelfth and last Imam, or legitimate successor of Mahomet, according to the Chias. The Persians assert that he ascended to heaven, without having ceased to live, and that he is destined to reign at some period over the whole world, and to kill an Anti Muhammed, whose armies he will destroy with the assistance of the prophet Jesus. The king Chah Abbas the Great projected the directing of the devotees of Persians to the tomb of this Imam, to hinder them from carrying their money to Mecca, which is in the Turkish territory.

neers. Three non-commissioned officers of infantry of the line, assisted M. Verdier in his important operations. One of my colleagues, M. Joinard, resides at Tauris, in the capacity of interpreter of the government.

The prince's camp is composed of about two thousand five hundred men, regulated in the European manner, and commanded by Persian officers instructed and exercised in our manœuvres by M. Verdier. The soldiers, who are called in Persian serbaz*, are armed with muskets manufactured at Tauris on the model of ours, in a most perfect degree of imitation. The uniform of these new troops is a brown jacket, nearly of the same cut as our military dress, with a row of white metal buttons in front. The serbaz wear pantaloons of blue linen, and half boots, but their head-dress has not been altered; this is a cap of Astracan black sheep skin, common to the Persians of all classes and stations. To give themselves more of a military air, some ornament it with a feather. A guard, composed of picked men, is placed about the tent of the Chah Zadé. In short, the roll is beaten morning and evening, at regular hours; the guards are relieved every day, in the

* *Serbaz* literally means a man who stakes or risks his head. This expression appears to be singularly well adapted to designate a soldier.

morning, and the drums announce, as amongst us, the retreat and various exercises.

From all this military parade, the order and discipline which accompany it, one might suppose himself transported into a French camp. It is to M. Verdier, and the generous ideas of Prince Abbas Mirza, that Feth Ali Chah will soon owe an infantry, that will enable the Persian armies to contend with advantage against their enemies; while it is to M. Lamy, who has formed a kind of polytechnic school in the midst of the camp, that he will owe his officers of engineers. It is also to the gentlemen whom I have named, that he will be indebted for his cannon and artillery-men. If I obtrude these details on you, it is because I know that nothing which relates to the glory of our country, can be uninteresting: is there not also something great in the reflection, that the zeal and ability only of a few Frenchmen, have sufficed to create in a short time, such extraordinary changes in a distant and almost barbarous country; that it owes to them already this great step towards European civilization, that it will, perhaps, at some future period, owe to them the preservation of its independence, and that the French name will henceforwards never be mentioned there but with respect and gratitude?

Abbas Mirza has incorporated about one hundred and fifty Russian deserters, with his own

troops, and also a major of that nation. He required that they should be subjected to the same discipline, and adopt the French tactics; like the Persians, they are under the immediate orders of M. Verdier. The artillery, which is but limited as yet, is commanded by a Christian nobleman, named Timurat Khan, of the family of the last prince of Georgia.

Two days ago a party of troops left the camp, to meet Ahmed Khan, Beylerbey of Tauris, who returned from raising levies at Mouraga. Yesterday myself and companion were admitted to the presence of the Chah Zadé. This prince had sent me notice the previous evening, that he had despatches to deliver to me. We were introduced by the Mehmander Bachi, Feth Ali Khan Rechti. Abbas Mirza was in his tent, very plainly dressed, and seated in the European fashion, on an arm chair of gilt wood. He received us, according to his usual custom, in a most gracious and affable manner, repeated several times that he had a peculiar partiality for the French, and that he was desirous of committing a letter for our government to my care. We retired, much pleased with the condescension and kindness of the prince, and on returning to the tent of our countrymen, we received new proofs of his munificence: there being brought from him to each of us, a beautiful Cachemire shawl, and a tray laden with an excellent breakfast.

We expected to have departed this day, to continue our journey, and had even sent forward our baggage in the morning; but it was necessary to renounce that plan, because I have only just received the letter of the Chah Zadé; it is written on a fine paper, ornamented with gilding and rich vignettes, and enclosed in a bag of gold brocade. Mirza Buzurk, on delivering it, also gave me three others, one for Asker Khan, the Persian ambassador extraordinary at Paris, the second for the resident of his nation at Constantinople, and the third for the French chargé d'affaires at the Ottoman Porte. Our departure is therefore deferred until to-morrow morning, and the delay has obtained for us another opportunity of seeing Prince Abbas Mirza this afternoon. He was walking about for some time near the camp, occupied in firing with a carabine at the first mark that presented itself, and he seldom failed to strike it. This expertness did not surprise us in a prince, whose tastes and studies are wholly directed to the military art. If, when he ascends the throne, he limits himself to resisting unjust aggressions on the part of his neighbours; with all the qualities he possesses, Abbas Mirza cannot fail to be not only a good monarch, but a great general.

LETTER XXVIII.

Road from Tauris to Erzerum—Entry into Turkey—Siege of Baiazid—Timur Bey—Stay in the Camp of the Curdes—Meeting of two Caravans—Conduct of a Persian named Souhan Kouli Khan—New Excesses of the Curdes—Visit to Osman Pacha, the new Governor of Erzerum, in the Village of Alidjeklek—Arrival at Erzerum, &c.

Erzerum, June 25th, 1808.

On the 11th of June, at four o'clock in the morning, we left the camp of Prince Abbas Mirza; on the next two days we returned through Chebister and Tesouch, and previous to arriving at Khoi, we again saw the lake of Mouraga, (Deriai Chahi, or the royal sea), the fetid and bituminous waters of which, owing to the heat of the season, exhaled a more infectious and noisome odour than on our first passage.

Khoi had just experienced another earthquake, which caused great damage: a part of the city had been thrown down, and the inhabitants had scarcely recovered from the consternation created by this disaster, so common in Persia. We stopped on the 14th at Zorava, a place of mournful recollections. This village was the place in which

M. Bernard met his death, amidst the dreadful sufferings of the plague.

On the 15th, we met two numerous caravans, one of which came from Bagdad, and the other from Tauris, they were both going to Erzerum. The reason I mention them to you now is, that they will soon make an important figure in the narrative of our journey. We heard at Kara Ini that the Curdes held the city of Baiazid closely besieged. Some unfortunate Armenians, whom we met the next day, confirmed this disagreeable intelligence: their villages had been burnt by the Curdes, and they were flying from the Ottoman territories with their families, and the few effects they could save from the rapacity of those robbers, to seek an asylum in Persia. I consequently recommended our mehmandar to make a circuit, and avoid the roads to Baiazid; you will soon see how our intentions were fulfilled.

In the environs of the village of Kilisia Kendi, otherwise called Havadjek, where we slept, the same night, there was a considerable camp of those very thieves. A Persian, named Bairam Mirza Bey, was appointed to see that they should not commit any depredations on the Persian territory. That evening they struck their tents, to go and fix themselves half a league further off.

On the 27th, we departed from Kilisea Kendi

with an escort of twenty cavalry, quitted the Persian territory at ten o'clock in the morning to enter that of the Grand Signor. Soon after a party of about thirty Curdes, that we had perceived on the left, at a short distance from the road, sent some men to reconnoitre us. Our escort assured us they had made us pass for envoys of Prince Abbas Mirza, who were going to Constantinople. Full of this idea, and of the great confidence inspired by our mehmandar, we thought ourselves sufficiently distant from the Baiazid road, and beyond the reach of the Curdes who besieged that city, when passing a defile about five in the evening, we suddenly found ourselves in the very midst of a camp of those plunderers. I know not what could be the motive of our mehmandar's conduct on this occasion, or whether he was influenced by fear, but he delivered us into the hands of Timur Bey, the chief of the Curdes. After having received his wages and a silver watch, which I presented to him, on the express condition that he should not depart for Teheran until we were liberated by the rebels, the wretch abandoned us to our fate during the night after our arrival, in spite of all his protestations of attachment. Thus were we left at the mercy of the Curdes and their chief, whose reputation was not at all calculated to inspire confidence.

Timur Bey is an old man of about sixty years

of age: he besieges Baiazid on his own authority, with the intention of dispossessing the present governor, and replacing him by one of his nephews, a son of the former Pacha Mahmoud. His army is about five thousand strong, composed of Curdes;* it is encamped opposite to Mount Ararat, and he has two principal chiefs under his orders, one of whom is called Abdul Aga, and the other Hussein Aga. To save appearances, and give an air of justice to this act of violence and rebellion, he has drawn over three or four hundred Persians, commanded by a man named Souhan Kouli Khan, nephew of the governor of Erivan.

Timur Bey, who we already knew as inimical to the French, received us in his tent, with a coldness which, from the first moment, made us fear we should be detained much longer than agreeable, notwithstanding the fine promises of our mehmandar. He, however, made us sit down, offered us pipes and coffee, and a few minutes after Souhan Kouli Khan, on whom all our hopes were founded appeared. We reminded the latter that we were returning from the court of the king of Persia; that we were attached to the

* The Curdes encamp in the open air, the chiefs alone having tents; the others dig a ditch of two or three feet deep, which serves them for a bed, and a *kaba*, or coarse woollen cloak, is their only cover when sleeping. Their lance is stuck into the ground beside them, while their horses are attached to a stake.

French embassy; and that we depended on him alone to be restored to liberty, and obtain the horses necessary for continuing our journey. This application had the desired effect, for he not only promised them for the following morning, but conducted us to a tent which he had caused to be prepared for our reception.

On the 18th, at day-break, I hastened to remind him of his promise in the evening: he continued for some time to repeat that the horses were coming, but concluded, at length, by declaring, that it would be impossible to procure them, and that we must wait until the next day. All my intreaties were useless, and I could not obtain satisfaction, except that he swore by his eyes to give us the means of departing on the following day. In the course of the morning we received a visit from the two chiefs Abdul Aga and Hussein Aga, and were very much incommoded during the whole day by those of their Curdes, who whilst recounting their warlike exploits, kept their eyes fixed on our baggage in a manner by no means agreeable. To give you an idea of their bragging and ferocity, one of them boasted of having killed ten Russians with his own hand in the course of a single day!

Returning to the tent of Souhan Kouli Khan, on the 19th, I found him preparing to mount his horse. He stated, with a triumphant air, that they were going to attack a fortified village,

situated at the foot of the rock on which the city of Baiazid is built: and being desirous that we should witness this brilliant enterprise, he intended to detain us for that purpose, after which we should depart.

We soon saw the Curdes leave the camp, and proceed towards the village, which was very distinctly seen from the place we were. They returned two hours afterwards without having derived any other fruits from their hectoring, than cannon balls, which killed a number of men and their horses.

Souhan Kouli Khan, and the other chiefs of banditti, of whom I could no longer entertain a doubt but that he formed one, then formally declared, that it was not in their power to grant us a single horse, because as each Curde had only his own, they were obliged to keep them for themselves, and to have them always saddled and bridled, to obey the orders continually received from their chiefs. Upon this I offered money, but new objections were started; I produced the firman of the king, which commands all Persians to supply our wants, reminding them that I was the bearer of a letter from the Chah Zadé Abbas Mirza; and concluded by threatening to complain of their conduct at Teheran and Tauris. At length, after paying a pretty large sum I obtained the liberty of rejoining the two caravans of Bagdad and Tauris,

that we had met in the Persian territory, and which had also been ransomed on their passage by these freebooters.

We had already loaded our baggage early on the 20th, when Souhan Kouli Khan sent to request we would delay our departure for a few hours, to wait for the chiefs of the two caravans, who had some business to settle in the camp. This demand being no more than what was reasonable in appearance at least, we readily consented to it; but we soon found its sole object to be that of making new claims on our purses. We therefore mounted our horses, and ordered the muleteers to proceed. The Khan sent hastily after us, to represent the dangers to which we were going to expose ourselves; and on his seeing that we were determined, he wanted to retain us by violence. We now forgot that we were the weaker party, and our patience, which had been put to such severe trials during four days, was completely exhausted. The khan was in consequence reproached with his perfidy and falsehood, in such unqualified terms, and we spoke of the Curdes, his friends and allies, with so little regard, that we must have become the victims of our rashness, had it not been for the letter of Abbas Mirza, the mere sight of which suddenly brought him to his senses. He either felt or affected to feel his error, and wished to atone for it by consigning us, without further delay, to the care of the two chiefs of the cara-

vans, with whom we immediately departed. The two latter, to whom we owed our liberation and safety during that part of the journey which we had to perform from Baiazid to Erzerum, told us they were only enabled to obtain permission from the Curdes to proceed, by paying them a forced contribution of several loads of dates, coffee, *habas* or Arabian cloaks, and five hundred piastres in money, which they had been obliged to give, to satisfy the rapacity of the khan. A short time afterwards we arrived safely in a valley, two leagues from Diadin, where we found the caravans encamped for the remainder of the night; the road was covered with numerous parties of Curdes, who were carrying off stolen horses and flocks of sheep. That evening we made our agreement with the Bagdad caravan leader, to be escorted as far as Deli Baba, where we expected to engage post horses.

Our conductors, who had just formed an arrangement with the Curdes, had taken an escort from amongst the robbers themselves, in order to be respected by those of their class whom they might meet: this is an established custom in these barbarous countries, though not always exactly observed. On the following morning when we were setting out, our new friends wanted to extort money from the peaceable traders; this brought on a quarrel that was very near ending in blows. It terminated, however, quietly, and

though the six hundred loaded mules which formed the two caravans, extending more than a league in length, presented new temptations for pillage to the Curdes, the formidable number of muleteers, merchants and travellers, all well armed, made them more circumspect. We had only one alarm, which was in the environs of Deli Baba. The rear of the caravan was attacked on the 23d, at three o'clock in the morning, by robbers who were placed in ambush; but there being very few of them, they were put to flight, before those who led were informed of it.

The Curdish commandant of Toprak Kalé behaved much more politely. His son came at the head of a troop of cavalry, to levy a contribution of thirty-three parés for each of our beasts of burden, and the chiefs of the two caravans thought they ought to acknowledge the moderation of this proceeding, by voluntarily presenting him with several loads of coffee and dates, some boots and habas of Bagdad.

We have again, and indeed during these three days past, seen Mount Ararat and the Convent of the Three Churches, where we had been received with musket shot on our former journey. All the plain, from Diadin as far as Toprak Kalé, still presented a picture of the utmost desolation. The Curdes having just before burned one hundred and eighteen hamlets and villages, which had been inhabited by unfortunate Armenian Christians!

On the 24th, several peasants whom we met, confirmed the news we had already heard, that Yousouf Pacha no longer governed Erzerum; they informed us he had been replaced by his Kiaya Bey, and that we should soon meet the new Pacha, who was going to Kers, about some affairs of his government. In the morning of the same day, we parted from the Emin Aga, our conductor, who had manifested innumerable cares and attentions towards us throughout: we then proceeded to secure post-horses at Deli Baba.

The posts in Turkey are not on the same footing as in Europe. The *menzils*, or relays, are placed at very unequal distances from each other, and sometimes thirty leagues may be travelled without seeing one. We had great difficulty in procuring horses at Deli Baba; the Pacha's officers having put all those of the district in requisition, and if we at last obtained them, we had to thank the Tatar dress of an Armenian who I had brought from Teheran as my servant. This fellow in his borrowed costume, was greatly respected by the masters of the Turkish posts, and seemed at times to forget his natural cowardice; his large sabre and yellow kalpak* made the

* The Tatars, who are improperly termed *Tartars*, perform the duties of couriers in Turkey. They wear as a distinctive mark of their employment, a *kalpak* or cap of Astracan grey skin, the top of which is rounded and covered with yellow cloth.

women and children fly; and if I had taken his advice, he would have been allowed to appropriate the best horse to himself, in imitation of the real Tatars who accompany travellers. He assured me that by acting otherwise, I would betray his disguise, and whenever I required the smallest service from him, he trembled all over, lest he should be detected.

At Alidjeklek, a village where we next arrived, we learned that the Pacha was expected in an hour at farthest. The Tatars in attendance, after having addressed the post master, informed us that they had orders to take horses wherever they could find them, and in consequence of this they seized on ours. My Armenian, who a moment before, had urgently entreated me to stop in this village, would have been happy to sink a hundred feet into the earth when he saw them alight at the door of our inn. Disconcerted at their unexpected apparition, the most ridiculous pangs suddenly succeeded to his tone of command, and in his fright, which was discoverable in every feature, he found a thousand reasons for inducing us to proceed as fast as possible, forgetting that we had been just deprived of the means. At length Osman Pacha arrived, when we sent to request permission to pay our respects and deliver a letter of recommendation that we had for him; this was granted without hesita-

tion. We found him a very courteous old man, and were received kindly; he made us sit beside him, ordered us to be served with pipes and coffee, and commanded that horses should be furnished to us immediately, to proceed to Hassan Kalé. He, at the same time, delivered to our fictitious Tatar a letter for the musellim who governed Erzerum in his absence, recommending him to treat us with all the respect and attention due to foreigners. We then departed, to the great joy of my boaster, who began to resume all his assurance. But he had not yet reached the termination of his troubles. Our horses, already fatigued with a long journey, were unable to carry us far, and it was necessary to halt two leagues from where we started. To mend matters we were obliged to go without any supper in a deserted village, from which the inhabitants, seized with dread at the approach of the delis of the Pacha, had all taken flight.

We have at length reached Erzerum, after having rested yesterday at Hassan Kalé, and marched the whole of the night. During the two last days we continually met Delis, Tatars and Agas, who were going in great haste to join the Pacha, and increase his train, already very numerous. I give you but few details of this road, having fully informed you of them on my journey into Persia.

To-morrow we shall depart, and change our course. The excessive heats which prevail at this season have determined us to take the road leading to the Black Sea, we shall therefore go to Trebizond. Before we can reach that city, we shall have to pass through a mountainous country, but as this will be new to us, the circumstance may tend to make the journey appear less tedious.

LETTER XXIX.

Road from Erzerum to Trebizond—Elidja—Kotchik—Baiboud—Chebin Khané—Jaila—Mountain of the Ten Thousand—Description of Trebizond—Lazes—Roadstead of Platana, &c.

Trebizond, July 7, 1808.

It is said to be more than sixty leagues from Erzerum to Trebizond. We made our agreement in the first of these two cities with a Turkish caravan leader, who engaged to conduct us here in nine days; and have been at Trebizond since the day before yesterday. I depart to-night for Sinope, and my travelling companion, who is not desirous of again seeing the native country of Diogenes, as he is already acquainted with it, will wait here for an opportunity direct to Constantinople.

Our first day's journey was six hours march. On quitting Erzerum, we passed three leagues to the left of Elidja, celebrated for its fountain of hot water, and took a direction to the north-west. Kotchik, a village of three hundred inhabitants, Turks and Armenians, was our first station, on the 27th ult. We there witnessed a very curious

dance, on the occasion of the marriage of one of the principal Turks of the place. The female dancers, who had probably been brought from Erzerum, had their faces half uncovered; and their lascivious gestures seemed to afford great pleasure to the Mussulmen, who were tranquilly smoking their pipes at the door of the house, whilst the bride and the other females who attended the nuptials, saw this exhibition through their lattices. On the 28th we marched eight hours, and passed the night in the open air, according to the common custom of those who travel in caravans. The heat was intense during the whole day, and towards noon we made a halt of some hours, in a valley shaded with fine trees. Here we met a numerous company of Lazes, inhabitants of the borders of the Black Sea, whom I shall have occasion to notice hereafter; they marched with flying colours, headed by an Aga, and were going to join the Pacha of Erzerum.

Although the day had been intensely hot, the night was very cold. We ascended considerably in the afternoon; passing mountains still covered with snow, and it was even then thought necessary in the midst of summer, to light large fires.

On the following day we experienced more heat; having descended again into the plain, in a beautiful country covered with trees, and the richest verdure. We again passed the night in

the open air, in a meadow, on the bank of a rapid stream, which we had crossed by a half ruined bridge, although our guides were accustomed to perform this journey several times in the year, they could not tell us the name of it. This day's journey lasted nine hours.

On the 30th, we marched eight hours, to reach Baiboud, a town of three or four thousand inhabitants, mostly Mussulmen. It is built partly in a valley, and partly on very steep rocks, and divided in two by the river which we had seen the day before: previous to entering Baiboud, it is passed by a very handsome wooden bridge. The Aian, or commandant, resides in a small citadel which commands the town. The environs, at the side by which we entered, on the south-east, are embellished with gardens and water-mills. On the opposite side, towards the north-east, they only present a picture of sterility.

The Aian of Baiboud does not enjoy a very good reputation with European travellers, who have had any transactions with him. He had already attempted to ransom one of our couriers, and is a kind of rebel, who often presumes to make extortions from strangers passing through his district. Fortunately we had no cause of contention with him, and went on to encamp at a quarter of a league beyond the town, in a valley where we discovered a small fountain.

These fountains, very common on the roads of

Turkey, are a great comfort in a country destitute of all the conveniences of life, and those resources found elsewhere in travelling. As it is a point of religion amongst the Turks to give drink to those who are thirsty, the Pachas and opulent individuals, to perform an act agreeable to God, erect them at regular distances on the road, wherever local circumstances will permit. A similar custom would be very desirable in many parts of Europe.*

We slept in the open air also on the 1st of July, after a march of nine hours: our present plan is to avoid all villages and inhabited places, a mode of travelling which is very insipid; but fortunately it will not last long.

Entering the high mountains on the 2d, we soon after reached Chebin Khané, a Turkish village built on craggy rocks, and rested there some hours to breakfast, as well as to let the heat of noon pass. This place was almost deserted; during summer all the inhabitants go with their flocks to Jaila, another village situated at the northern side

* Were those public wells more general on our European roads, they might, perhaps, be an obstacle to the progress of hydrophobia, which disease often arises from the neglect of giving water to the dogs. That scourge, so common with us, is unknown in Turkey, and, perhaps, it would not be hazarding too much to say, that it is in some measure preserved from it by these establishments.

of the mountain; they remove in the great heats to breathe the north wind, from which this high ridge of mountains screens them at Chebin Khané during winter; a very abundant stream of limpid water irrigates Jaila. We terminated this day's march there, having travelled seven hours.

At Jaila we saw some of those gigantic dogs, which are often found in various parts of Asia; and whose ferocity equals their size.

After quitting the above place very early on the 4th, we found a great deal of snow in the mountains, in some parts it was eight or ten feet deep. We ascended considerably, and were suddenly enveloped on all sides by thick clouds. Though not new to us, we enjoyed this scene again with pleasure.

The sun, by dispersing the clouds, presented an enchanting prospect which served to recompence our fatigues. We were in the midst of a delightful country, diversified with numerous and beautiful plantations. A magnificent wood formed a curtain of verdure round this mountain, the freshness of which was still that of spring, before us was seen the entrance of one of the most beautiful valleys perhaps in the world. My companion, who had travelled over the whole of Switzerland, had never seen any scenery there that could be compared with what we now surveyed.

After a considerable halt, we mounted our horses to enter the above valley; an improved cultivation, woods, gardens, and houses, where prosperity seemed to dwell, alternately decorated it on both sides. A small river meandered through the valley, and joined the Black Sea some leagues further to the north. We crossed this stream several times, either by fording or over bridges, travelling sometimes on one bank, sometimes on the other. The desire of admiring such a rich picture more leisurely, induced us to make a halt of two hours in a Turkish Inn on the border of the river. All is contrast in this world; you would suppose, no doubt, that men perpetually accustomed to see such fine views, are inspired with mild and hospitable manners. But far from being the case here, the people appeared fanatical and barbarous, they are in fact Lazes. A man named Karaman Oglou, the keeper of this Inn, attracts strangers only for the purpose of extorting money from them by force of arms. We were very near quarrelling with him: having settled our bill, he wanted still to exact an additional contribution, which we refused to pay. Though almost at the gates of a large city, he exercises his depredations with impunity.

Delivered from this plunderer, we continued to ascend, and soon discovered the open sea. We were now on the *Mountain of the Ten Thousand,* and traversed the same ground that was passed by the

Greeks under Xenophon: we returned from the same countries; and though we had no other resemblance to them, we might, by our own feelings, conceive a part of the joy which must have been felt by those warriors, harrassed by a long and dangerous march, on discovering that element which was to terminate their fatigues. We descended the mountain, and at length arrived at Trebizond. M. Dupré, the French consul, had the goodness to receive us into his house, where we have met several masters of merchantmen, both French and Italians, whose ships are at anchor either at Trebizond itself, or in the roadstead of Platana.

The ancient and modern Greeks give Trebizond the name of Trapezontas, which is derived from the word *trapeza*, a square or table, owing to the form of this city. In fact, from the top of the Mountain of the Ten Thousand, it presents that of a long square. The Turks, who corrupt all names, call it Tarabezoun. Its population is estimated at about twenty-five thousand inhabitants, of whom a small number are Greeks and Armenians. The city is built in a rich and magnificent country, on a low and smooth declivity, commanded by hills, well wooded. This coast not offering any shelter from storms, especially the north wind, which blows directly against it, vessels never come here, except to take in their lading; whilst waiting for favourable winds, they anchor

at Platana, a fine and convenient roadstead, three leagues westward of the city. The trade of Trebizond is very considerable; it chiefly consists in timber for ship-building, which is found in the neighbourhood, and in copper and furriery brought from Erzerum.

According to Pausanias, Trebizond was a colony of Trapezunte, a town of Arcadia; but Xenophon says, it was founded by the Greeks of Sinope, who were, themselves, descended from the Miletians. Diodorus Siculus is also of this latter opinion. After the several defeats of Mithridates, it fell into the power of the Romans, and subsequently formed part of the possessions of the emperors of Constantinople, who erected it into a principality. Alexis Commenes, surnamed the Great, took possession of it in 1204, with the title of duke, when the French and Venetians became masters of Constantinople, under Baldwin, earl of Flanders.

The city of Trebizond is defended by two castles, the entrance of which is prohibited to strangers, so that we can only see them at a distance; one of them is not far from the shore, on a more elevated site than that of the city. It is said there are a great many antiquities, and fragments of monuments of the middle ages found here; but independently of the inconveniency that there would be in visiting them, the short stay I make here, does not admit of my doing so.

Neither the beauty of the country nor its commerce, have been able to soften the manners or humanize the disposition of the inhabitants of Trebizond. The Lazes or Turks of this coast are a barbarous and semi-savage people, whose physiognomy bears all the impression of ferocity: even their look has something sinister in it. Their complexion is tawney, and stature athletic. Filthy and negligent in their dress, which is made of a coarse stuff of dark brown, they reserve the whole of their finery for their arms, which are, amongst the more opulent, richly ornamented with silver. They wear a cap of green cloth and peculiar form, which falls on their shoulders; while their arms, legs, and breasts are left entirely naked. They never go out, even in the city, without enormous pistols, a sabre and dagger in their girdles, and a loaded carabine on the shoulder. Although constant assassinations are committed in the day-time, they remain unpunished. The authority of the Musellim, named Chatir Oglou, is an absolute nullity. Tayar Pacha, who commanded for some time at Trebizond, had succeeded in suppressing a part of these enormities; he began to bring the Lazes to a sense of duty, and his name alone made them tremble: unfortunately he has been recalled, and since his departure they have again shaken off the yoke; being now permitted to do as they please: it would even be imprudent to make an excursion

out of the town; owing to the great danger of being robbed, or even assassinated.

I thought it best not to embark on board a boat which is to depart for Constantinople in a few days; for besides the annoyance of going in company with such people, I am desirous of seeing Sinope, and all this part of the Asiatic coast of the Black Sea. I shall therefore undertake this voyage more commodiously in a ship belonging to the island of Ithaca, the captain of which navigates under the French flag. Born in the kingdom of Ulysses, and professing the Greek religion, he gave his ship the double appellation of Telemachus and Saint Nicholas. A curious association it must be confessed!

LETTER XXX.

Passage from Trebizond to Samsoun—Description of Samsoun—Greek Village of Cadi Keui, &c.

Samsoun, July 15th, 1808.

It is now three days since we anchored in the port of Samsoun. We hoped to have arrived at Sinope without meeting any obstacle, but fortune has willed it otherwise; and we are waiting for an easterly wind, which can alone take us to our destination; if it only blows from that quarter twenty-four hours, we may safely calculate on reaching Sinope.

We have never lost sight of land since our departure from Trebizond; there has not occurred any thing interesting to communicate in a navigation that has lasted six days; having had contrary winds continually, we merely anchored once, previous to our arrival here, in a desert roadstead, at a short distance from Kerasoun (the ancient Cerasonte).

I have visited Samsoun and its environs: the town is not large, containing at the most only four or five thousand inhabitants, of whom a small number are Greek, and Armenians. This place is twenty-four leagues from Amasia, and

thirty from Tocat. The Turks of Samsoun are rather tractable, and not armed from head to foot, like those of Trebizond; with the exception of some abusive language, we could not complain much of our reception. It is very easy to obtain provisions here, but the water of the town is turbid and unwholesome. We therefore went to Cadi Keui, which is only a quarter of a league from it. This village, where I reckoned about fifty Greek houses, all of wood, is in an agreeable position, on the declivity of a hill, covered with olive trees, to the south-east of the town. We bought tolerably good wine there. The Greeks of Cadi Keui, like almost all their countrymen settled in Asia, have forgotten their mother tongue, and only understand Turkish: they are otherwise a better people, and much less crafty than those of Europe and the islands of the Archipelago. From the air of prosperity that appears in their houses, it would seem that they are not so much oppressed by the Turks as many of their neighbours.

LETTER XXXI.

Passage from Samsoun to Sinope—Description of Sinope—Guerzé, ruins of a gymnasium and of the palace of Mithridates—Ak Liman—departure from Sinope and return to Constantinople.

Sinope, August 6th, 1808.

HERE I am, in the native country of Diogenes, that uncourtier-like philosopher, whose discrimination enabled him so justly to appreciate the nothingness of mankind, and see through the weakness of poor human nature. I cannot help adding another reflection, suggested by the above name, which is, that a similar philosophy would never succeed amongst the moderns. We are too corrupt and servile, and an imitator of Diogenes would now remain in his tub unnoticed, however, I do not see why the story of the lanthorn is not as applicable to the days we live in, as it was in the time of the cynic.

At a short distance from Samsoun, we saw the mouth of the Iris, which the Turks call Kizil Irmak, or the Red River. Its yellow and muddy waters, mixed with those of the sea, communicate their colour to the latter, at a distance of more than four leagues; but they do not make them lose their salt taste. I arrived at Sinope on the second day after that of our departure from Samsoun.

Mr. Fourcade, our consul, has had the kindness to show me all that the town and its neighbourhood contains in the way of curiosities, which enables me to attempt giving you some account of them.

Sinope or Sinub, as the Turks say, is situated on a narrow isthmus, which serve as a communication between the continent and the peninsula on which the ancient city was built. It is at an equal distance from Trebizond and Constantinople, that is to say, about one hundred leagues from each, thirty westward of Samsoun, and twelve south-east of Cape Indjé. Its port, or rather roadstead, formed to the north-west, by the town and peninsula, and at the south-east by the continent, is the best and safest on the Asiatic coast of the Black Sea. The Turkish government has made it one of the arsenals of their navy, and they are now building a seventy-four gun ship of the line here, but from the want of artizans, the work goes on very slowly, and for more than a year past they have scarcely laid the keel of the vessel. But still they are supposed to be employed on it, and if they continue to display the same activity, they may perhaps launch it towards the end of ten years!

I estimate the population of Sinope at twelve thousand inhabitants. The greater part are Turks, all contained within the fortress. The Greeks and Armenians are settled in a suburb at the sea shore, on the southern side of the peninsula. It

is also in this quarter that the French consul's house is situated. The Turks of Sinope are mild and peaceable, and their manners present a striking contrast with the ferocity of the inhabitants of Trebizond.

The climate of Sinope may be compared to that of Provence, for, in general, the same productions are found here as in the south of France; the country, however, is more wooded, and colder during winter. The environs are pretty well cultivated; there are especially a great many olive trees; vines also succeed here, and a tolerably good wine is made at Guerze, a small town, six leagues to the south-east.

I traversed all the peninsula: it is mountainous, and may be about four or five leagues in circumference. In the most elevated part, there is a small lake of excellent fresh water, which supplies the numerous fountains of the town, by means of subterranean conduits constructed by the ancient Greeks. According to their usual custom, the Turks suffer these useful works to fall into ruin; their avarice and apathy always prevent them from repairing and maintaining them, at least until the want of water forces them to do so. At the foot of the mountain are seen the ruins of the palace of Mithridates, and those of a beautiful gymnasium; we entered into the halls of each. An idea may still be formed of the extent and distribution of these great edifices, from the state

in which their ruins are. the walls built with fine bricks, of a size at least triple those which are made in Europe, are still standing. There is nothing wanting but the marble and the roofs: the Turks have carried off the former to decorate their mosques.

Mr. Fourcade, who is well versed in the science of antiquity, has made some very curious researches relative to this city and its monuments. He thinks that the ancient Sinope occupied the space between the modern fortress and the mountain which bounds it to the east, and that it was not on the isthmus, but rather on the peninsula. He also conceives the ground must have been raised considerably in that part, by the earth washed down during very heavy rains, and that the forum was in front of the gate of the fortress, at a short distance from the sea, on the north side. He calculates, with reason, that under a more enlightened government, it would be easy, by making some excavations, to discover all the boundaries of the ancient city, and a number of valuable monuments; what must give great weight to his opinion is, that a step cannot be taken in the peninsula, especially after long continued rain, without finding some remains of antiquity. He has already formed a well-chosen and numerous collection of them, including many rare medals, which the inhabitants sell by weight.

The interior of the modern town, or fortress, also presents a considerable quantity of ancient ruins. The ramparts are built in great part with columns of white marble, bas-reliefs, and antique statues piled in confusion through the gross ignorance of the Turks, and which are now in a deplorable state of decay. The consul pointed out to me, near the gate which opens on the peninsula, one of those bas-reliefs in which the figures are inverted. He has made several attempts to obtain permission from the Turkish government to remove it from the wall, and has offered a reasonable price for it; but all his efforts have been useless. Its removal might be sufficient to cause a revolt in the country! The Turks cannot comprehend why any value should be attached to such objects; the curiosity of Europeans, in this respect, always appears suspicious, and founded on other motives than these which really influence them. They suppose that we are instigated by the hope of finding treasures, or by a snperstition which they themselves would find difficult to explain. It is necessary to be better informed than I am on this subject, to give you a description of all that Sinope contains worthy of interesting the curiosity of an enlightened traveller. This place alone might furnish the subject of a large work.

I am waiting from day to day for an easterly wind, to continue my course towards Constantinople. I have already once left the port in a

Turkish sacoleve, on the first of this month; but the wind having changed to the west, we were obliged to return, and land at Ak Liman (the White Port), a little desert bay two leagues westward of the town. Our consul having had the goodness to send me a janizary and two horses to take me to the city, I shall not leave him again until the weather is decidedly favorable.

LETTER XXXII.

Arrival at Constantinople—Revolutions of 1807 and 1808—Deposition of Selim III.—Succession to the Throne of Moustapha IV.—Entry of Moustapha Bairaktar into Constantinople — Violent Death of Selim — Deposition of Moustapha IV. — Elevation of Sultan Mahmoud II.

Constantinople, August 30th, 1808.

A STEADY easterly wind having constantly favoured us from Sinope to this capital, our passage has been effected in five days. Fortunately I had engaged the principal cabin of a Turkish sacoleve* for myself and servant; but in spite of my agreement with the master, it was so encumbered with merchandize, that we could scarcely find room in it for our luggage and beds. All the other passengers were heaped in confusion on the vessel's deck; there were more than thirty of them, amongst whom were women, children, dervises, and Greek priests. It is necessary to have sailed in such a crazy bark, to form an idea of the annoyance and all the other inconveniences experienced in such vessels: therefore, my first care on entering the Bosphorus was, to take leave

* A sacoleve is a Turkish boat, carrying three square sails, and a large latine sail astern.

of my Turkish and Greek fellow passengers, whose patience and resignation I admired more than once on the passage. I quitted the sacoleve at the second castle of Asia, which is in front of Buiukdere, and took a boat with two pair of oars, which conveyed me in less than two hours to Constantinople. I have been here since the 14th instant, having arrived on the eighty-fourth day after my departure from Teheran.

I had already heard at Sinope of the new revolution which had taken place in this capital, but in a manner still too vague to be able to state the particulars of it. Amongst the Turks, as every where else, each relates the events of the day according to his passions, and the bias of his party; so that before it reaches a distant province, the news has passed through so many hands, that instead of the truth, one often hears only the most absurd and contradictory reports. Now that I have obtained such correct information on the spot, that I cannot admit a doubt of its veracity, I shall acquaint you in a few words of these events, having previously reminded you of those which preceded them in the month of May of last year.

Selim III. nephew and successor of Sultan Abdul Hamid, filled the Ottoman throne during eighteen years. Superior from his learning and the greatness of his views, to all his predecessors, this prince, on observing attentively the other

states of Europe, seemed to have comprehended the causes of the decline of his empire. He was desirous to communicate the benefits of civilization to his empire, which alone remained in the midst of ignorance and fanaticism. Great misfortunes had marked the commencement of his reign; the aggrandizement of Russia at the expense of the Ottoman empire, the revolt of the Servians, the state of independence which many of the principal pachas had assumed, in short, the insolence and indiscipline of the corps of janizaries; such were the results of the existing system. Selim deemed it necessary to commence the business of reform by annihilating the janizaries; an enterprize the more dangerous, as the institution of that militia is reputed holy, and as it had become so numerous, that to attack its existence and interests, was in a manner to attack those of the whole nation. He, however, undertook the task and with this intention, created the troops of the nizami djedid, who were exercised in the European manner, and subjected to the military discipline adopted by civilized nations. To provide for their maintenance, it was necessary to levy new taxes; these were also raised. He established at the same time a new mode of administration, and surrounded himself with a council of twelve ministers, who were all declared partizans of those innovations. During some time, every thing seemed to succeed to the

Sultan's wishes; the janizaries confined themselves to low murmurs, they did not yet dare to let their rage burst forth; but they gradually found means to create an opportunity for doing so, and paved the way for this revolution with their usual means, that of setting fire to different points: this is always a sure sign of discontent. When they thought the favourable moment was arrived, they at length openly revolted.

The revolution commenced on the 26th of May, 1807. The janizaries of the garrisons of Feneraki, and the castles which defend the entrance of the Bosphorus on the side of the Black Sea, were the first to give the signal of rebellion. They cut the Reis Effendi to pieces: he had gone to them to notify the Sultan's order to submit to the new regulations. On the next day they marched to the capital, and in a few hours made themselves masters of the batteries there, at Tophana, and of some that defended the Seraglio. Selim sent a firman, which commanded them to lay down their arms and separate; this they tore with contempt, and addressed a proclamation to the janizaries and all good Mussulmen, inviting them to proceed within two hours to Et-Meidan (the meat market) and to join them in the common cause of religion. Before the close of day more than eighty thousand men were assembled there. Their insolence increasing with their numbers, they sent

to the Sultan, to demand the head of his favourite the bostandji bachi. Selim being alarmed, had the weakness to accede to their wishes; emboldened by this concession, they massacred all the ministers of the new divan on the same day, in the streets.

On the 23d, their audacity no longer knew any bounds; they went in a body towards the seraglio, and signified to the Grand Signor, by the cheik ul islam (the muphti) that as he had not as yet given an heir to the empire, and having infringed the prerogatives of the sacred militia, the people no longer acknowledged him for their sovereign, and required that he should immediately resign his throne to his cousin, Moustapha. Selim already deprived of his most faithful servants, abandoned by all his partizans, who had fled from fear, could oppose no resistance, and Moustapha IV. was proclaimed Sultan by the rebels. A salute of artillery from the seraglio announced this event, and the end of the revolution, which had lasted only three days. On the following day, order and tranquillity were re-established in the city, and a week after the new Grand Signor went to the mosque of Euib, to gird on the sabre.*

Selim had preserved a great many friends. All

* This ceremony, called *Taklidi Seif*, is instead of a coronation.

the sensible part of the nation regretted his deposition, and Moustapha could not, without danger to himself, have taken his life at a moment when the public mind was still in a great fermentation. The new sovereign was continually at the absolute disposal of the oulemas and janizaries: he owed his elevation to them; his first act was to abolish the new taxes, and re-establish the insolent militia in all their privileges. The news of what had passed in the capital, soon reached the camp assembled on the banks of the Danube, upon which the janizaries revolted against their commander in chief, the Grand Vizir; they beheaded him, together with the principal officers of the army, who were all partizans of Selim, and the temporary command of the troops devolved on Moustapha Bairaktar, then aga of the town of Roustchouk.

Moustapha Bairaktar, who happened to act such a distinguished part in the revolution of last month, was in the beginning only a mere janizary, born in an obscure class; he distinguished himself by his courage and intrepidity in a battle against the Russians, and was promoted to the rank of bairaktar or ensign, for having captured a standard from the enemy. By a succession of events not necessary to be stated here, he subsequently became aga or commandant of Roustchouk.

Bairaktar had for the last year entertained the

project of re-establishing Sultan Selim on his throne. Thinking the moment favourable he assembled the troops of his government, all Bulgarians, and repaired to Adrianople, thence he took the road to Constantinople, as if going to do homage to the new sultan. Until then, he had always appeared to serve Mustapha IV. and the latter was easily deceived as to his designs. It was on the 26th of last month that he made his entry into the capital with several thousand men, and the sandjak cherif, or sacred standard of Mahomet; on his arrival he marched to the seraglio, demanding the person of Selim.

Moustapha surrounded in his palace, thought he might preserve his sovereignty by causing the unfortunate Selim to be murdered; but that crime did not prevent him from being deprived of it. Bairaktar, who became furious, caused his deposition to be pronounced by the oulemas, and proclaimed his brother Mahmoud II. in his place. From that day, Bairaktar has been grand vizir; he rids himself by degrees of all the enemies of Selim, and he has already restored the troops of the Nizami Djedid, under the new name of *seimens*.

Such is the abridged history of those two revolutions. Tranquillity is once more re-established in Constantinople, but it seems rather a stupor than a real peace. The janizaries do not consider themselves vanquished, and it will not

surprize me if a new convulsion should soon imbrue this capital with blood. One circumstance worthy of remark is, that in those two periods of disturbance and civil wars, the Europeans residing in the suburbs of Pera and Galata, have not experienced any violence or attack on their property. The raias, themselves, have been unmolested. It was very much to be feared that the rabble by which the city is usually filled on such occasions, would have taken advantage of the general terror, to indulge their propensity to pillage and burning. This moderation may probably be attributed to the policy of their chiefs, who were desirous of giving to their cause an appearance of justice and legality.

LETTER XXXIII.

Revolution of November, 1808.—Death of Moustapha Bairaktar, and of the Sultan Moustapha IV.—Destruction of the Seimens or Troops of the Nizami Djedid.

Constantinople, Dec. 22d, 1808.

It is to renew the subject of troubles and massacres, that I again write to you: our forebodings and fears were but too well founded; blood has again flown in this barbarous city, and a crowd of unhappy families groan on the still smoking ruins of their habitations.

The seditious spirit of the janizaries, restrained during some months by the energetic measures of Moustapha Bairaktar, was nevertheless inwardly conspiring new crimes. The grand vizir dazzled by his first success, and depending too much on the courage of the seimens, a militia as yet but little experienced, had the imprudence to send his Bulgarian troops to the borders of the Danube. The janizaries waited with patience for this moment, and they did not certainly flatter themselves, it would have arrived so soon; they were far from foreseeing that their enemy, after having displayed such great talents, would have committed so palpable an error. He has paid dearly for his fault as you will see by the following narrative.

On the 14th ultimo, after several skirmishes between the two parties, the seimens were attacked in the streets of Constantinople by the janizaries. The latter went subsequently to the aga, or commandant of the new troops, who was a creature of Bairaktar, and murdered him. Emboldened by impunity, they repaired on the following night to the palace of the grand vizir, and set fire to it. Moustapha Bairaktar was enabled then to escape the danger which threatened him, and had time to enter the seraglio, with a considerable number of his partizans. The 15th was a dreadful day for the city. The janizaries consigned all the quarters which separate the seraglio from the square of the Hippodromus, to the flames, and the fire lasted, without intermission, three days and three nights. We were enabled to contemplate this horrible spectacle from our terrace, and to form some idea of the shocking confusion that must have resulted from it. Except the seraglio, where Bairaktar's seimens were inclosed, and the most distant suburbs, all the interior of the city was in the power of the janizaries; they attempted, but unsuccessfully, to cross the channel, and render themselves masters of Pera and Galata, the cannon of the fleet moored in the port, swept the shore whenever they ap-

proached it. The waters of the port were dyed with the blood of the killed on both sides, who were thrown from the ramparts of the city and the seraglio.

At the beginning, the janizaries spread a report of the death of Bairaktar; they said that his body had been found half burnt, in a subterraneous passage which leads from the palace of the grand vizir to that of the sultan; and as a proof of their veracity, it was pretended that they had seen the ring which contains the impression of the great seal of the empire, on one of the fingers of the corpse. This news did not remain long uncontradicted. Bairaktar, at the head of a small number of brave men, made several sorties against the rebels, and strewed the streets of the capital with their bodies. At length, he met a glorious death, when his ruin drew down that of all his party. The janizaries remained victorious; those of the seimens who could not escape from their fury by flight were cut to pieces without pity, and the fleet, which on the preceding evening had fired grape shot on the promoters of the revolt, very prudently joined their party. The triumphant rebels passed the port, traversed the suburbs of Galata and Pera in great numbers, and hastened to Levend Tchiflit* to burn the barracks of the

* The barracks of Levend Tchiflit are on the road to Buinkdere, about a league below Pera.

Nizami Djedid. Returning afterwards, they repaired to Scutari, to celebrate their victory there by excesses of the same kind. The fine barracks formerly built in that town by Sultan Selim, were in a short time reduced to ashes. The Francs were in the utmost terror during their passage through Pera, but on this occasion also we escaped all danger. I saw these wretches march through the street in which we reside; they appeared to be armed with clubs, pickaxes, and any other weapons they could procure; they marched in pairs, as proud as if they had just saved the state. I could not help being astonished how such a rabble were capable of deciding the destiny of an empire.

Deprived for ever of his supporter, Sultan Mahmoud was still anxious to preserve his sovereignty: he first deprived his brother Moustapha IV. of life, and then opened the gates of the seraglio to the janizaries. This prince is now the sole scion of the Ottoman dynasty: and he owes the preservation of his throne merely to there being no other heirs of this family.

I shall here conclude my account of those sanguinary events; as they have passed under my eyes, I can safely assure you of their authenticity. Since their late successes, the insolence of the janizaries is at its height; they are absolute masters of the city, and they will, it is thought, long continue so, as all the attempts the sultan

could make against them, can only increase their strength and audacity. I think the annihilation of this militia impossible, so long as the Mussulmen retain their religious prejudices. To attack the janizaries is to attack the whole nation, as most of the Turks now form part of this corps. The Ottomans do not resemble any other nation; all their patriotism is founded on a blind faith in their dogmas, the maintenance of an absurd religion, and the institutions which spring from it. It is only by destroying this impulse that a sultan can reduce them. But who would dare to do so? If successful he would at the same time destroy the illusion on which his power is founded. It is therefore solely through the lights of reason and philosophy, that such a revolution can be expected; and as this nation is less disposed than ever to receive them, while it obstinately repels the hand which would prevent it from falling into the abyss, we have only to conclude, that it will end, sooner or later, by annihilating itself through its own folly and perverseness.

LETTER XXXIV.

Constantinople—Turks—Raias, Greeks, Armenians, Jews—Seraglio of the Grand Signor—Mosque of Santa Sophia—Square of the Hippodrome—Mosque of Sultan Ahmed—Imperial Castle of the Seven Towers, &c. &c.

Constantinople, April 24, 1809.

Detained for some time in the midst of my journey, and obliged by unforeseen circumstances to prolong my residence at Constantinople beyond the time I expected, you would certainly not be pleased with me were I to preserve an absolute silence with respect to this capital. However, my intention is not to give you a complete description, nor to enter into a very detailed account of its monuments, and all that it furnishes worthy of curiosity. I can, in fact, do little more than repeat what has been said before by a great number of travellers. For twenty years past the information we have acquired of this city, seems to lessen its distance from us; Constantinople being now almost as well known as the other great capitals of Europe. As to what regards the manners and customs of the Turks,

I have already informed you that I had collected some materials on the subject, during a residence of three years in this country; they are still scattered notes that require arrangement, but which may form a new series of letters on a future day. I shall, at present, limit myself to satisfying your curiosity on the points which seem most calculated to create interest.

The position of Constantinople is admirable, and the most beautiful, perhaps, that exists in the known world. Nothing can be more rich and striking than the aspect of this great city, on approaching it by sea, and after having doubled the Seraglio Point. The multitude of houses which rise, like an amphitheatre, on seven hills; the various colours with which they are painted; the cypresses, and other trees; the innumerable gardens which seem to insulate them from each other; all these objects overtopped by the elegant minarets and majestic cupolas of mosques, form a truly enchanting scene, when perceived at a certain distance. Placed between two seas, it could not fail, in other hands than those of the Turks, to be the sovereign arbitrator of both. The Hellespont and Bosphorus seem to form only one immense roadstead, where vessels of all nations are in a perpetual motion of arrival and departure. Its magnificent port would contain thousands of them, and presents a safe refuge from tempests; the largest ships can anchor close to

the shore. The people of Europe and Asia, separated by a mere arm of the sea, communicate with each other at all hours of the day, by means of innumerable boats, conducted by rowers whose strength and skill have no equal. But all this is beautiful only at a distance: enter the city, and the illusion of its exterior magnificence immediately ceases. Miserable habitations of clay, covered with deal boards, filthy and narrow streets crowded with wandering dogs, and heaped with filth, steep and crooked ascents; such is, in a few words, the capital of the Ottoman empire!

Nature has done every thing for its environs, in spite of the apathy and indolence of the Mussulmen, for nothing can be compared to them; but what advantage would not a more industrious nation derive from such scenes! How art could embellish, at a trifling expense, the picturesque sites of the two shores of the Bosphorus! They want nothing but to be vivified by the beneficent breath of liberty and civilization.

The population of Constantinople should not be estimated by its extent. If the immense space occupied by this rich city was covered with houses of four or five stories, it ought to contain at least a million of souls; but the most repectable dwellings have only one story, or two at most, and each family has a house to itself, as oriental customs do not admit the letting of lodgings to

others. The city contains besides within its inclosure, a prodigious number of mosques, cemeteries, public baths, and gardens. The seraglio of the Grand Signor alone, occupies almost all the site of the ancient Byzantium. By different calculations, Eaton estimates the population of Constantinople at less than three hundred thousand souls: I believe this number is below reality. Constantinople is as extensive as Paris, comprehending the suburbs of Pera and Galata. By admitting, as an approximative calculation, that there are in this city a thousand streets, in each street a hundred houses on an average, in each house a family composed of five individuals, there would result from it one hundred thousand houses, and a population of five hundred thousand souls. This calculation would therefore reduce the number of the inhabitants of Constantinople to a little more than half that of Paris, and I do not think it any exaggeration when I say, that it is very little above or below that number.

This population is composed of Turks and raias, or subjects of the Grand Signor (who are not Musulmen) of various nations, such as Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. A great part of the Greeks of Constantinople are islanders from the Archipelago, who are termed by the Turks, Taouchans, or hares, no doubt from their agility in climbing rocks and mountains. These Greeks wear a red woollen cap, and follow the trades of shoe-

makers, fishers, dealers in tobacco and publicans. The Armenians are architects, sarrass or bankers, goldsmiths, bakers, barbers, tailors, house-painters, &c. They are men of a patient and peaceable disposition, bold speculators, and very industrious; but they love money beyond all expression; their conversation constantly turns on the means of gaining it; their countenances, naturally as serious as those of the Turks, cheer up at the sight of a para, and they are so accustomed to count this small money on the little tables which serve them for counters, that the thumb and fore-finger of their right hand become crooked from it.

The Armenians are otherwise very worthy people, and though rapacious, they are in general reputed to be honest. There is a great number of Catholics amongst the Greeks and Armenians of Constantinople. The latter are fervently devout, and I believe there is but little bigotry in their religious zeal; the most wealthy form pious foundations, and give a great deal to the churches. The Jews are, of all the raias, the most insensible to insult, for the very simple reason that they are the most despised and degraded; these people are objects of raillery and insult, not only to the Turks, but even to the Greeks and Armenians themselves. Though many amongst them are very rich, they never shew themselves in public except under a garb

of misery, so much do they fear the extortions of the Mussulmen. They are known here by the same signs which characterize them in all other countries; viz. their dirty and neglected beard, the form of their kalpak or bonnet, and their tatters. During the holy week of the Latins and Greeks they generally beware of appearing in the streets, for they would be stoned by the children of the Christians, without any protection from the police of the country.* There are, however, some very worthy persons found amongst them, and the best proof that can be given of it, is that they exclu-

* It is a curious and undeniable fact, that in all ages and in every country, no matter how enlightened the period, or liberal the people, persecution and ignominy have been the portion of this singular sect, which, with an extraordinary stock of ignorance and effrontery would still persuade us, (unutterable folly!) that they are the chosen people of God!! Leaving them to enjoy this fond illusion, the Editor merely wishes to observe, that having had frequent opportunities of witnessing the treatment experienced by the Jews in Mahometan countries, and comparing it with recent events in Germany, where popular resentment has again overtaken them, he is decidedly of opinion, that *religion* has infinitely less to do in their alleged sufferings than *politics*. The Editor ventures to add, that it is to their isolated mode of life, insatiable trading spirit, and studied estrangement from the rest of mankind, so admirably commented on by Voltaire, in his famous work on the Spirit and Manners of Nations, we ought to look for that obloquy and insult they meet with amidst civilized as well as barbarous communities, rather than to their method of adoring the Divinity.

sively hold the situations of salesmen or brokers, and cashiers to the European merchants, and that several have been attached in those capacities, from father to son, for a number of years, to the principal French commercial houses; some are also auxiliary dragomen of the consuls in the ports of the Levant; others are bankers, or trade on their own account. The poorest of them are dealers in old clothes, carders of mattrasses, or they sell thread, needles, pins and ointments in the streets. Their usual language is a corrupt Portuguese. This sect has, in the interior of Constantinople, several separate districts, with small synagogues. The most considerable are at Galata and Cas Keui, behind the arsenal and near the palace of the Capitan Pacha. There are some thousands of them in this quarter. Constantinople also contains many Polish, Russian, and German Jews, and others from Wallachia and Moldavia; those are more cleanly and neat in their dress; they wear black gowns, long hair flowing on their shoulders, with large flapped hats. The Levant Jews are in general very strict, and greatly attached to their religion; they make an excellent wine for their own use, known in this country by the name of lawful wine: it is the best and purest that can be procured here; and always unadulterated, as their religion prohibits them from mixing any extraneous ingredient with it.

The Europeans, who are distinguished under the general name of Francs, inhabit the suburbs of Pera and Galata. The greater part of them have been born in Turkey, of parents originally of different nations, and there are to be found in those two quarters a small number of real Europeans, especially amongst the females. The total number of both may amount to a thousand or twelve hundred souls. The ambassadors and other ministers of foreign powers have their palaces at Pera; nearly all the merchants reside in Galata.

If we except their religious prejudices, and the absurd fanaticism which is the natural consequence of them, the Turks of Constantinople are not without some good qualities: it is impossible to deny them the reputation of integrity in their dealings; in business they make but one offer, and it very seldom happens that they fail in their engagements. The air of superiority which they affect towards those who do not believe in their dogmas, when it does not degenerate into insolence, is more comic than imposing, and merits pity rather than anger. By flattering their pride, taking advantage of their natural carelessness and indolence, the raias, who are more expert and cunning, obtain almost all the profits of commerce and industry from them. This is a kind of compensation for that slavery to which they have so completely

resigned themselves. It is not either to liberty, glory, or independence, that the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews look, but to gain money; and whilst they think and act in conformity to this too general maxim, it may well be supposed they will long remain the Helots of the Mussulmen.

The Turks adopt the trades and professions which require least activity and exertion in preference to all others; they are dealers in tobacco and glass, saddlers, tailors, shoemakers, mercers, druggists, confectioners, &c. Seated on the floor in the middle of their shops, they do not attempt, like our *calicots* and men milliners, to attract the attention of passengers, much less praise their own merchandize. Immoveable on a small cushion, they wait patiently for customers, smoking their pipes, and sipping their coffee. If a purchaser appears, they are able to reach from around them, and without stirring from their places, the articles required, they coldly mention the price, and receive it in the same manner, without ever offering any thing else for sale, than that which is demanded. They seldom ask too much, and never abate from the prices they previously fixed. If they cannot agree with the customer, they replace their goods, without pressing him to take them, or calling him back. I do not believe that there exist happier beings in the world than these men; they

never complain of their fate. As composed in prosperity as they are reconciled to misfortune, each condition appears to them as the inevitable effect of their destiny; they enjoy the former as if it were their due, and patiently wait a compensation for the latter in that "better world," which their sanguinary and crafty prophet has promised all true believers.

Notwithstanding what I have just asserted, the poorest classes of Mussulmen lead a more painful and laborious life than that of the traders. In common with the poor Armenians, they employ themselves as *hamals*, or porters, and as *sakkas*, or water-carriers. These two classes of men, especially the first, are very numerous at Constantinople, and in general in all the ports and commercial towns of the Levant.

The Turkish hamals are famous for their vigour and skill. By means of a large pad, or leathern cushion stuffed with hair, which they fix on their shoulders like a pack, with woollen straps, they carry the heaviest burdens with facility: a single rope, which they hold with one hand, is sufficient to preserve its equilibrium. They are constantly moving, from the port to the extremities of the city, and thus pass through the crooked and uneven streets mostly without a stick, or even stopping to rest themselves. They excel particularly in conveying burdens which require the united strength of several men; such as casks of oil,

or enormous cases of merchandize; these are suspended by thick ropes, and with the aid of poles, strengthened with iron, which they bear on their shoulders, ten or twelve of these porters, half before and half behind, all march with the same step, and incredible quickness. It would be very dangerous to be in their way, for having once started, one cannot stop without the others, so that they overturn every thing they meet. The sakkas or water carriers do not use wooden or tin buckets, like ours; they carry the water which they draw at the numerous fountains of the city, in large skins, which they hang on their right shoulders with a leathern belt. Others load a horse or mule with two larger skins, and serve out water to passengers in large cups of tinned copper. In each company of Janizaries, there is a non-commissioned officer called *sakka*, whose functions are to distribute water to the soldiers when on a march. His rank corresponds nearly with that of corporal.

The calling of hamal and sakka, painful in itself, become still more so to those poor people during the fast of Ramazan, when the Mussulmen should abstain from all nourishment, smoking and even taking snuff, between sun-rise and its setting. If the Ramazan occurs in hot weather, they must then feel more than ever the miseries of their station. Whilst the wealthy sleep away that time, turn day into night,

and wait quietly on their sofas for the hour they can give themselves up to the pleasures of the table, the unfortunate man who groans under his load, cannot drink a glass of water without committing a crime; and he must work, that he may have wherewithal to eat at night. Sometimes he vents his ill humour on the raia; if he finds him eating in public, accusing him of a wish to mortify him, often seizing that pretence for beating or insulting the former.

This privation is not less severe for those who act as boatmen. Exposed during the whole day to a burning sun, exhausted by hard labour, without the liberty of recruiting their strength, I do not think it even enters their minds to envy the fortune of the great. Like all Mussulmen, they console themselves by frequently exclaiming, *Allah Kerim!* God is merciful!

I have already stated that my intention was not to give you a complete account, either of the Turks or Constantinople. I shall therefore conclude this letter with a few more observations on the capital.

The most remarkable edifices of Constantinople, are the Seraglio of the Grand Signor, the Mosque of Santa Sophia, and that of Sultan Ahmed, in the square of the Hippodromus. It would be great presumption on my part to attempt a description of the interior of the Seraglio; the Sultan is not so accessible as the king of Persia, I have therefore only seen those parts of his palace, which are open to strangers; that is to say, the first and second courts, and the hall of the divan. On this head I refer you to the descriptions of M. Poucqueville, who was lucky enough to penetrate into the interior of the Harem, in the absence of the Sultanas and odaliques. You will find in his work details both curious and interesting, on those scenes till then unknown, and of which the truth cannot be doubted.*

The principal gate of the Seraglio has given its name to the Ottoman government, viz. the Sublime Porte! The Turks lavish the most pompous epithets on it, and I really know not why; for nothing is less deserving of such an honour. It might be supposed the gate of an hospital or a prison, rather than that of the palace of a sovereign. The gate presents a heavy mass of stone, whose whole ornament consists in two columns of verd antique; but the Turks have changed their capitals and bases, to substitute others corresponding with their own barbarous architecture. The foldings of the gate are covered by plates of

* The learned and amusing work of Mr. Hobhouse, also contains a very full and entertaining account of the Turkish capital. An English edition of M. Poucqueville's book, from the pen of the late Miss Plumbtree, appeared in 1812, published by Mr. Colburn, and though principally circulated amongst our larger literary establishments, it certainly deserves to be much better known.—ED.

iron, and garnished with enormous nails. On the right and left are two niches worked in the wall, where the heads of rebels, or of great men beheaded by order of the Sultan are placed; and which usually remain exposed there for three days. In the middle of a small square, there is a neat fountain in the Turkish taste, with inscriptions in gilt letters, and on the right, the Mosque of Santa Sophia, which forms the corner of the square, and of a street that runs into it. If I do not name this street, it is because in Turkey the streets have no names, nor are the houses numbered. The districts alone are designated by the name of the mosque or monument most conspicuous in them, so that a stranger is left to find his way as well as he can.

After having passed through the great gate of the Seraglio, the first court is entered. In this, are the Sultan's stables, and the hospital of the pages, and other officers of his household. A narrow paved path-way leads to the *Orta Capou*, or middle gate. This is guarded by capidjis, and leads to the second court ornamented with a green plat, and richly planted. The nobility of the Porte, and the ambassadors admitted to the audience of the Grand Signor, cannot enter it on horseback; that honour being reserved for the Sultan alone. The kitchens of the Seraglio are on the right, and the hall of the divan on the left. The latter is neither remarkable for its riches or

elegance, it has a cupola and is covered with lead. Here the grand vizir administers justice in person, on Tuesdays and Fridays of each week. Above the sofa of this great dignitary, there is a small window latticed with gilt wood, from behind which the Sultan often observes what passes, without being seen. We entered this place the day on which our last ambassador had his audience of Sultan Selim; there was, as usual, a splendid dinner served up to the legation. The ambassador sat at the same table with the vizir; all the dishes were in fine Chinese porcelain, and were replaced by others with amazing dispatch.

A third gate, at the bottom of this court, on the right, leads to the interior of the Sultan's apartments; it is also there that the hall of audience is situated. These places have been so often, and so well described, that I shall abstain from adding any thing to what has been said of them by other travellers.

The imperial mosque of Sultan Ahmed, built on the model of that of Santa Sophia, is in the square of the Hippodromus, of which it occupies almost the whole of one side. This is a very beautiful edifice, remarkable for its lightness, and the elegance of its minarets, which are six in number, each with three tiers of galleries. It is to this mosque that the Grand Signor goes in

great pomp to pray on the first day of the two Bairams.

The square of the Hippodromus, which the Turks call *At Meidan* (the horse square,) is nearly of the same size as the Place du Carrousal at Paris. It is the only resemblance that exists between them. Excepting the part occupied by the mosque of Sultan Ahmed, and by its large court, the remainder is surrounded with irregular wooden buildings. At one of the extremities of the At Meidan are seen a stone obelisk falling in ruins; and further on in the square, another Egyptian obelisk, of one piece of red granite, covered with hieroglyphics. The height of this monument is about fifty feet; it stands on a pedestal of white marble, half covered with earth, on which are still seen bas reliefs, representing saints and martyrs, with Latin inscriptions of the lower empire. Between these two obelisks, is a bronze column formed by three serpents entwined, the heads of these formerly served for its capital; but they are broken, and it is not well known when or by whom: the Turks assert that a former Sultan cut them off with a single blow of his scimitar.

The imperial castle of the Seven Towers, or *Jedi Koulé*, is at the western extremity of Constantinople, on the border of the Sea of Marmora, and forms, on that side, one of the three angles of

the city. It seems to be in a complete state of abandonment and dilapidation, and no longer serves to confine state prisoners, as people generally believe, but rather the ambassadors of powers at war with the Ottoman Porte.*

Constantinople also contains other curious monuments of different ages; but I fear that in dilating further on this subject, either to repeat what others have said before me, or to anticipate that which I propose to give you more in detail hereafter. Permit me, therefore, to conclude this letter here, and if it has not presented much novelty, it will, at least, serve to prove my solicitude to contribute to your amusement.

* M. Poucqueville has given, in the second volume of his work, a complete and very curious description of the Castle of the Seven Towers, where he was imprisoned for twenty-five months, with M. Ruffin, chargé d'affaires of France, during our last war with the Ottoman Porte.

LETTER XXXV.

Excursion to Scutari and the Grand Signor's Wharf (Hounkiar Iskelesi)—Manufactory of Paper established by Sultan Selim III. &c.

Constantinople, July 15, 1809.

My departure for France is at length fixed; in another month I shall quit Constantinople to return to Paris. It is necessary to have passed five years distant from one's country, to conceive the joy inspired by the mere idea of again seeing our family, and the objects of our affections; but why should this happiness be of such short duration? It will be necessary to return to this barbarous country, and the regrets of a second separation will be softened only by new recollections.

I am now going to collect my ideas for a moment, to give you an account, before my departure, of two excursions I have made with some friends in the environs of this capital.

We first went to revisit Scutari: it was from this town, that I departed last year for Persia, and as I mentioned it but very superficially in my first letter, it merits a more detailed description.

Having formed one of a party to dine there, the Francs were unable to venture alone into Asia, without running the risk of being insulted, we

therefore took one of the Janizaries of the French embassy. On landing at Scutari, we deposited our provisions in a large Turkish coffee-house on the sea shore, and then went to walk about the town.

Scutari is built on the coast of Asia, at the entrance of the Bosphorus, opposite Constantinople; it is a tolerably large town, built of wood like the capital, and containing a population that may be estimated at twenty, or twenty-five thousand souls. A great fire had lately burnt one entire quarter of it, over the ruins of which we had to pass. We went to see the cemetery, to which those of Constantinople are not to be compared for beauty or extent. It forms a large forest of cypresses, pierced with irregular alleys, where many well preserved remains of Roman roads are seen. Most of the wealthy or powerful Turks direct that they shall be buried there, that their tombs may be safe from the profanation of infidels, who, according to an old prophecy very much believed amongst them, will at some period seize on their European possessions. Close to these burial places is an extensive meadow covered with the finest verdure. The howling dervishes, attracted, doubtless, by the beauty of the scene, have had a *tekke* or convent built here. These howlers belong to a very fanatical order, and they seldom suffer Christians to pass, without some abusive language. They wander all over

Asia, and go from town to town, putting the good Mussulmen under contribution; in return, they amuse them with feats of strength and slight of hand, like our jugglers. We subsequently visited the new buildings of Scutari, on the sea side. All the streets are built on the same plan, in straight lines, wider and cleanlier than in the old town. There is also a magnificent mosque, built by Sultan Selim III., who gave his name to it as well as to several manufactories. The only printing-press that existed in the whole Ottoman empire, was in this spot; but it has been closed since the last revolution; and the barracks of the Nizami Djedid, at a short distance from it, were reduced to ashes at the same period, as mentioned in a preceding letter. The latter had on the sea-shore, a small exercising ground, surrounded with palings; and the Grand Signor had constructed a kiosk there, to which he sometimes repaired to see the military evolutions which took place every Thursday. The Sultan has similar kiosks in all the public establishments.

After this walk, we returned to our coffee-house, and dined in a small room that looked into a fine garden, and soon after crossed the Bosphorus, to return to Tophana.—While crossing, we passed the tower improperly termed that of Leander by Europeans. The Turks call it Kiz Koulé, which means the Maiden's

Tower; it is on a rock in the midst of the channel, at less than a mile from the coast of Asia. The garrison consists of five or six bostandjis, whose duty is to salute the Sultan by a discharge of artillery, when he goes to sail on the Bosphorus.

Some days afterwards we went on a new excursion to the Grand Signor's wharf, or landing place, (Hounkiar Iskelesi.) We embarked at Tophana, a suburb situated on the borders of the sea, in the neighbourhood of Galata, which contains a cannon foundry, and the grand park of artillery of the capital. The square of Tophana is decorated with a fine mosque and fountain; the Turkish boatmen attend there for persons who wish to visit the country by water, and are in the habit of annoying them to have the preference, nearly in the same manner as the drivers of hackney vehicles in the environs of Paris.

We crossed the European shore of the Bosphorus, with delightful weather; the canal was covered with numerous vessels and elegant caiques; and however accustomed one may be to this charming spectacle, it is always viewed with new pleasure and increased admiration. At first are seen the summer palace of the Grand Signor at Bechik Tach, and its gardens surrounded by a wooden trellis, painted in various colours, which at a distance, produces the effect of transparent lace; afterwards, those of the Sultana

Validé, the Grand Vizir and of the former Reis Effendi. To which ever side the view is directed, whether towards Europe or Asia, handsome country-houses, gardens, and beautiful villages are seen; for both shores are thickly strewed with them. About half way, we passed between the two castles of Europe and Asia, situated in the narrowest part of the Bosphorus. At length we arrived in Asia, at the landing-place of the Grand Signor; this is a charming spot, opposite the town of Therapia: two large meadows, shaded by beautiful plane trees, attract a large concourse of Mussulmen and Europeans. The first pass their time in smoking and taking coffee in the cool and delightful shade, while the second go there on parties of pleasure. The adjacent forests are also very much frequented by sportsmen. On a little eminence is to be seen a fine manufactury of paper, the only one, I believe, which exists in the whole Ottoman empire. I had already visited this establishment, with several of my friends, two years before. A Turk of Constantinople had given us letters of recommendation, one for Emin Effendi, and the other for Selim Aga, both directors of this manufactory, one of the most useful monuments of the unfortunate Selim's reign. The first being absent, we were received by Selim Aga, an Englishman, formerly a merchant in India, who had turned Mussulman, in consequence of a long series of

misfortunes. Very learned, and possessing a perfect knowledge of our language, he received us in the most obliging manner, and under his guidance we visited every part of that establishment, which is indebted to him for numerous improvements. The paper made in the manufactory of Hounkiar Iskelesi is very strong and thick: it is polished with a round stone, for the use of the Turkish scribes, and is not inferior, in any respect, to that which is usually brought from Venice. This manufactory, built about four years ago, is in the European style; the edifice is of stone, and divided into three wings; in front is a kiosk or pavillion reserved for the Grand Signor, and the whole presents an appearance both agreeable and regular. Before entering into the principal court, we passed through two gates, ornamented with the arms and cypher of the sultan, and verses in letters of gold, relative to the formation of this establishment.

There was formerly another manufactory of paper near the village of Kiaghad Khané, or the Fresh Waters, on the border of the little river Cydaris, which runs into the port of Constanti nople; for some years past it has been discontinued.

LETTER XXXIV.

Road from Constantinople to Lemberg, the capital of Austrian Gallicia.—Aiolou Bourgas—Choumla—Roustchouk—Camp of the Grand Vizir, Yousouf Pacha, on the banks of the Danube—Chistow—Rohva—Lom—Widdin—Entry into Wallachia—Kalufut—Russian Outposts—Craiova—Bucharest—Rinnick—Entry into Moldavia—Tokehan—Galatz—Yassy—Balabat—Chotzim or Chottin—Entry into Poland—Okop—Tarmapol—Zatchow—Arrival at Lemberg—Description of that City.

Lemberg, October 2nd, 1809.

I DEPARTED from Constantinople on the 14th of August. After having waited two days for favourable weather at the village of Buinkderé, on the Bosphorus, I embarked in a Greek boat with four pair of oars, which I had engaged to take me to Varna, by the Black Sea. This town is in Europe, about fifty leagues from Constantinople. The persevering violence of the north wind, soon forced me to renounce this project.—We made sail in the night of the 15th, and it was not without great difficulty we could reach the village of Feneraki, situated on the European side of the Bosphorus, at the entrance of the Pont Euxine; the storm detained us there two days longer. When it was a little abated, we again

ventured on that tempestuous sea, but a squall of wind drove us to a considerable distance from land, and our crazy vessel, without a deck, and open to the waves on all sides, would have foundered, had it not been for the courage and vigour of the rowers, who made incredible efforts to gain the shore, and fortunately landed me at the castle of Kila, two leagues from Feneraki: from this I repaired to Domouzderé, a village inhabited by Bulgarian Greeks. The storm continuing, and there being no appearance of a speedy change for the better, the last resolution I formed was to go by land to Aiolou Bourgas, a small town at a short distance from Varna, and I agreed with my boatmen to meet them there. I took two days to make this journey, by travelling along the coast: on the first, I slept in a place called Midia, at the house of the Greek Bishop, and the second at Aiolou Bourgas; there I again changed my plan, and decided on continuing my journey by land to Roustchouk, by passing through Choumla. The Grand Vizir had lately left his entrenched camp near the latter town, to remove it to the banks of the Danube. All this part of Romelia was infested with the Asiatic troops, who committed a thousand enormities; wherever I passed, I was supposed to be a Russian prisoner, and abuse was not spared on me. I escaped, however, with words, and arrived at Roustchouk in one of those

little carts drawn by a single horse, which are called talikas. On passing through this town, I was very near being again assailed by the Turkish troops, though the Janizary who accompanied me took care to declare every where that I was a Frenchman.

I caused the guide to conduct me to the camp of the Grand Vizir, Yousouf Pacha, the same whom I had seen as governor at Erzerum, two years before. It was impossible for me to see him, and he would not take upon himself to permit me to pass the Danube, giving as a reason, that the Janizaries of the fortress of Giorgiova, on the other bank, were in a state of insurrection, and that he could not answer for my personal safety. I could only obtain, through the influence of an Italian physician in his service, a *bouiourdi*, or order, addressed to the Pachas of Nicopolis and Widdin, to permit me to pass through one or other of those two towns. The first alledged the same motives as the Grand Vizir, for refusing me permission to cross the river, and I was obliged to coast the Danube as far as Widdin, in passing by the towns of Chistow, Rohva, and Lom. The Greek Archbishop of Widdin received me very hospitably; after two days passed in negociations with the Pacha, I at length obtained permission to quit the territory occupied by the Ottoman troops. I crossed the Danube in a miserable ferry-boat, ac-

companied by an officer, as a flag of truce from the Pacha of Widdin, who was to deliver me to the Russian outposts, and I landed at Kalafat, a village burnt and abandoned, in Little Wallachia. Two leagues beyond Kalafat, four Cossacks, who scoured the country, approached with their lances poised to reconnoitre us: my poor Turk had hoisted a white handkerchief at the end of a long pole, and trembled all over. I showed my passports to the Cossack non-commissioned officer, who made a show of reading them, but held them upside down, and detached two men of his troop to conduct us to the first Russian outposts. We there found a major who spoke French very well, and who received us in the best manner; he had been taken prisoner at the battle of Austerlitz, and resided for some time at Nancy. We supped together, and I removed, as well as I could, the fears of the Turkish officer, who had a constant dread of being detained as a prisoner; he was, however, sent back the next morning, with an escort as far as Widdin.

Pursuing my journey, I first went to Craiova, the chief town of Little Wallachia, and thence to Bucharest. It is needless to detail some trifling difficulties and obstacles I experienced on this journey. All the country is occupied by the Russians, and I was subjected at every step to visits and interrogatories, from which no traveller is exempted. The same ceremonies recom-

menced at the gates of Bucharest; a fusileer had been appointed to conduct me to the commandant of the town; but the Janizary who had obtained permission to accompany me as far as that city, and who was perfectly well acquainted with it, seized the moment our escort and guide had turned down a street, to escape his vigilance, and lead me directly to the house of Mr. Ledoulx, French consul, and an old friend of mine. I had great need of repose, for I had caught a tertian ague in Bulgaria, and was exhausted with a journey of sixty leagues, performed in the little carts of Wallachia. Mr. Ledoulx had the goodness to receive me into his house, and offered to entrust me with a mission for the minister of foreign affairs, who was at Vienna, at that period occupied by the French troops. I accepted this proposal with gratitude, as it was calculated to afford me great facilities for completing the rest of my journey.

I remained five days at Bucharest. This city, the capital of Wallachia, is very large; it is built on a marsh, which must render a residence there very unwholesome. The greater part of the houses are of wood, and the streets, instead of being paved, are covered with large squared beams of timber, which cross them in their whole breadth. The use of carriages is general there; the lowest boyard, and the traders themselves never go out, except in a carriage or chaise; and

since the occupation of the city by the Russians, the military of that country have even exceeded in this luxury, which has almost become a necessary of life. Bucharest, like all the towns of Wallachia that I have seen, is filled with a prodigious number of convents and churches: it would be difficult to enumerate them. Every boyard or wealthy individual seeks to immortalize himself by forming pious foundations; so that nothing is heard on all sides but bells and chaunting.

On the 23rd of September, I departed from Bucharest. The war with Austria not permitting me to pass through Transylvania or Hungary, which are the usual and shortest roads for going to Vienna, I directed my course towards Yassy, passing through Rimnick, a town that separates Wallachia from Moldavia, and which has become celebrated from a victory gained there by Suwarrow over the Turks; it obtained for that blood-thirsty and ferocious chief, the surname of Rimininsky. From thence I passed successively through the towns of Tochan and Galatz: in the latter I saw the admirable scene which the breadth of the Danube presents; but I could not stop there: being bearer of a letter of recommendation to a Russian senator, president of the divans of Wallachia and Moldavia, whose usual residence it is; he had just departed for Yassy, and I immediately returned to follow him.

Yassy, the capital of Moldavia, is a handsome

town, smaller, but better built than Bucharest. The streets are planked like those of the latter. The palace of the princes of Moldavia is a fine edifice, and there are besides a great number of neat private houses. There are a great many Jews amongst the inhabitants, and several villages in the neighbourhood are entirely peopled with them. Their women, who are generally pretty, are distinguished by a costume equally rich and fantastic.

At Yassy I found the Russian senator to whom I was recommended, and met a very good reception from him; on the following day I continued my journey by Balabat, to Chotzim and Chottin, the last town of Moldavia, situated near the borders of the Dniester, in front of Russian Poland. I had the pleasure of meeting with a Frenchman there, who was employed in the capacity of secretary to the Boyard, the civil governor of the town; in the evening he conducted me to the military commandant, a German colonel in the service of the Emperor of Russia. His saloon for receiving company was not much unlike a guard-house; sabres, muskets, and arms of all kinds were hung against the walls, being their chief ornaments, and reminded us that we were in the midst of soldiers on a campaign. Most of the men were in an adjacent room, occupied in gaming or smoking; some played and endeavoured to prevail on the Russian

ladies to dance, these offered us punch on our arrival. We retired at eleven o'clock, as well satisfied as might be expected with such an entertainment.

Chotzim was the residence of a Pacha, who, at the commencement of the present war, surrendered to the Russians by capitulation. He was permitted to withdraw, with all the Mussulmen inhabitants. The Russians have now converted the mosques into churches, and raised the Cross on the minarets in place of the Crescent!

On the 28th I crossed the Dniester in a ferry boat, and landed in Poland at Okop, a small fortress occupied by the troops of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. Wherever I found Poles, the mere circumstance of being a Frenchman caused me to be received as a brother and a friend.

The most considerable towns I have yet seen in Austrian Gallicia, are Tarnopel and Zatchow. I reached this place, the capital of the province, yesterday. It is a very handsome and large city, at present garrisoned by the Russians: the houses are well built, and have a fine appearance; the streets too, are wide and straight, but so miry, that it is difficult to pass through them. Lemberg is situated on the river Pierewa, sixty-four leagues from Cracow. To-morrow, I shall continue my journey to that city, and thence proceed to Vienna by way of Moravia, where I expect

to find the French out-posts. All this country is so well known, and I have besides traversed it so rapidly, that it would be presumption in me to attempt giving you a description of it, and I therefore terminate a correspondence that can no longer interest you.

END OF THE LETTERS.

TABLE OF DISTANCES;

OR,

ITINERARY, FROM CONSTANTINOPLE TO TEHERAN,

By Hours of March of a Caravan.

TURKEY IN ASIA.

Days.		*Hours of March.*
1	Kurtal	5
2	Gheibizè	6
3	Nicomedia, or Ismith . .	$10\frac{1}{2}$
4	Kara Mousal . . .	$9\frac{1}{2}$
5	Kiz Dervend . . .	$7\frac{1}{2}$
6	Nicea or Isnick . .	$5\frac{1}{2}$
7	Ak Serai	$9\frac{1}{2}$
8	Gheivê	$3\frac{1}{2}$
9	Teraklu	7
10	Torbalu	$7\frac{1}{4}$
11	Kiostcbek	10
12	Nalikhan	$9\frac{1}{2}$
13	Sivri Hisar	$6\frac{1}{2}$
14	Bey Bazar	$7\frac{1}{2}$
15	Aias	$10\frac{1}{4}$
16	Angora, or Engurié . .	$10\frac{1}{2}$
17	Hairi Keui	$9\frac{3}{4}$
18	Aska Khan	8
19	Baltchuk	$6\frac{1}{2}$
20	Kitaib Ounou . . .	$7\frac{3}{4}$
21	Iosgatt	$15\frac{1}{2}$
22	Dichlidje	$5\frac{1}{2}$
23	Sourkeun	$5\frac{1}{4}$
24	Hadji Keui	11
25	Kizildjik	9
26	Bazar Keui	9

Days.		Hours of March.
27	Tocat	$6\frac{1}{4}$
28	Neo Cesarea, or Niksir	11
29	Ermeni Keui	$10\frac{1}{2}$
30	Kizil Geuzluk	$6\frac{1}{2}$
31	Mellam	$7\frac{3}{4}$
32	Koule Kisar	$9\frac{3}{4}$
33	Endres	10
34	Kara Kisar	$9\frac{1}{2}$
35	Zillé	8
36	Sabahktan	$12\frac{1}{2}$
37	Kerkif	$6\frac{3}{4}$
38	Lory	$8\frac{3}{4}$
39	Tolos	5
40	Pekerik	6
41	Achkala	11
42	Elidja	$7\frac{1}{2}$
43	Erzerum	3
44	Alvare	$4\frac{1}{4}$
45	Iaian	8
46	Deli Baba	9
47	Toprak Kale	15
48	Jandjalu	7
49	Diadin	12
50	Baiazid	9
	PERSIA.	
51	Areb Dilesi	7
52	Kara Ini	8
53	Zorava	8
54	Khoi	$7\frac{1}{2}$
55	Tesouch	$7\frac{1}{2}$
56	Chebister	7
57	Tauris	7
58	Seid Abud	$6\frac{3}{4}$
59	Tikmé Tuch	10
60	Turkmann	10
61	Miana	$9\frac{1}{2}$
62	Akkond	10
63	Hermaan Khané	$9\frac{1}{2}$
64	Zenghan	$8\frac{1}{2}$
65	Sultanié	$5\frac{3}{4}$

Days.		Hours of March.
66	Ebher	$10\frac{1}{4}$
67	Sia Dehen	$10\frac{3}{4}$
68	Kasbinn, or Kaswinn	$6\frac{3}{4}$
69	Hassan Abad	$3\frac{1}{2}$
70	Kerbous Abad	$9\frac{3}{4}$
71	Kemal Abad	10
72	Ali Chah Abbas	6
73	Teheran	$7\frac{1}{2}$
	Total Hours of March	$602\frac{3}{4}$

ITINERARY FROM ERZERUM TO TREBIZONDE.

TURKEY IN ASIA.

1	Kotchik	6
2		8
3		9
4	Baiboud	8
5		9
6	Jaila	7
7		8
8	Trebizonde	7
	Total Hours of March	62

MEMOIR

OF THE

PERSIAN AMBASSADOR.*

THE family of Mirza-Aboul-Hassan-Khan enjoyed the highest degree of royal favour during the reign of Aga-Mehemmed-Shah, the uncle and predecessor of the present sovereign, Feth-Ali-Shah. The subject of the present memoir, is the son of a distinguished military commander, who perished in the service of Kerim-Khan, regent and governor of the province of Fars, (Persia proper.) His uncle Hadji-Hibrahim-Khan held the most important post in the state, that of *Ittimad-eddewelt*, which corresponds with the office of Grand Vizir in Turkey. Aboul-Hassan became at a very early age governor of Xhurter-Dersoul, a part of Persian Arabia, on the confines of the Persian Gulf. One of the Shah-Zadés, or sons of the sovereign, Prince Mehemmed-Tahi-Mirza, governor of Shiraz, married a daughter of Hadji-Hibraham, the uncle and father-in-law of Aboul-Hassan, and another of his wife's sisters was united to the *Nizam-eddewelt*, a dignity corresponding with that of *Ittimad-eddewelt* (Grand Vizir.)

Such was the situation of this distinguished family, when one of those changes of fortune, so common in orien-

* From the LITERARY GAZETTE.

tal courts, hurled them from the very pinnacle of glory to the most dreadful adversity. Hadji Hibraham Khan, whose advancement of fortune excited the envy of the courtiers, fell a victim to unfounded calumny. He was accused of having conceived the design of seating himself on the throne, and of carrying on a plot in which the principal members of his family were implicated. The unfortunate minister was put to death, and his property confiscated: several of his relatives experienced a similar fate, and others had their eyes put out. Aboul-Hassan himself was stripped of his dignities and thrown into prison; but after suffering three months confinement, he was restored to liberty.

He employed the period of his misfortune in visiting remote countries. He travelled to Mecca and Deria, the residence of the chief of the tribe of the Wachabites. At length he embarked at Bassora, on board of an English vessel, and proceeded to Calcutta, to Lord Wellesley, who was at that time governor-general of India. He spent three years in visiting various parts of India, particularly the province of Deccan. He then arrived at Bombay, where he learnt that the King of Persia, being convinced of his innocence, had pardoned him, and invited him back to his native country.

In the year 1809, Aboul-Hassan, through the interest of his uncle, the *Emin-eddewelt*, was sent as ambassador to England. Mr. Morier, then secretary to the English embassy at the court of Theran, was appointed to accompany him in quality of *Mehmander*.*

* *Mehmander*, a kind of commissioner of the government, appointed in the East to provide for the maintenance and escort of ambassadors.

On his arrival in London, Mr. Morier was succeeded by Sir Gore Ouseley. Aboul-Hassan remained but seven months in the British metropolis; when he returned to his native country, accompanied by Sir Gore Ouseley, who was appointed ambassador to Persia. During the voyage, which lasted nine months, they put into the harbour of Rio Janeiro; thus Mirza-Aboul-Hassan may be regarded as the first Persian who has visited the New World. On his return to Persia, the King, to requite his services, raised him to the dignity of Khan,* which is nearly similar to that of Pacha in Turkey. In 1813, he was sent to Gulistan near Tauris, where he concluded a peace with Russia. In the following year, he was sent on an embassy to St. Petersburgh, here he resided three years, after which he returned to Persia, accompanied by M. Yerenerslof, ambassador to the court of Teheran.

Mirza-Aboul-Hassan is not merely known throughout the East for his diplomatic services, but is also ranked among those individuals who has successfully cultivated literature; he speaks Arabian, Persian, Turkish, Russian, Hindostanee, and English. During his travels, he has collected general ideas respecting the customs and manners of the nations he has visited, and the arts cultivated by them: he has written an extensive narrative of his travels in India, Turkey, Russia, and England, to which the King of Persia has given the title of *Hairet-nameh* (the book of wonder.) Mirza-Aboul-Hassan proposes to enlarge and improve this work by his recent observations on Germany and France. Feth-Ali-Shah has conferred peculiar honour on his ambassador, by presenting him with his portrait set in diamonds, which the latter constantly wears round his neck.

* See Literary Gazette; Review of Morier's Travels.

His Majesty has also presented him with an ode which he composed in his praise,* and which he accompanied by a superb standard. From this poetical composition, it would appear that Mirza-Aboul-Hassan is very high in the estimation and favour of his sovereign. All the relatives of his excellency occupy important posts, either at the court of Teheran, or about the person of the hereditary prince, Abbas-Mirzas, at Tauris. A nephew of Aboul-Hassan received in marriage the hand of one of the King's daughters, but the princess died at an early age, and Feth-Ali-Shah, to prove his attachment for the family, united him to another of his daughters.

Mirza-Aboul-Hassan is about forty-four years of age, of the middle stature, with a dignified and agreeable figure. His mind is cultivated, and his manners easy and polished.

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* This ode was translated by Von Hammer, during the ambassador's visit to Vienna.

THE END.

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